

THE ART *of*
WRITING & SPEAKING
The ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

SHERWIN CODY

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**The Art of Writing and Speaking
the English Language**

COMPOSITION

The Art of Writing and Speaking the English Language

By Sherwin Cody.

Vol. I.—**WORD-STUDY** (Spelling, pronunciation, use of the dictionary).

Vol. II.—**GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION** (Simplified system).

Vol. III.—**COMPOSITION** (Franklin's Method).

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Novace

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WRITING & SPEAKING
The ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

SHERWIN CODY

COMPOSITION

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• *Boston*

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COMPOSITION

INTRODUCTION.

THE METHOD OF THE MASTERS

For Learning to Write and Speak Masterly
English.

The first textbook on rhetoric which still remains to us was written by Aristotle. He defines rhetoric as the art of writing effectively, viewing it primarily as the art of persuasion in public speaking, but making it include all the devices for convincing or moving the mind of the hearer or reader.

Aristotle's treatise is profound and scholarly, and every textbook of rhetoric since written is little more than a restatement of some part of his comprehensive work. It is a scientific analysis of the subject, prepared for critics and men of a highly cultured and investigating turn of mind, and was not originally intended to instruct ordinary persons in the management of words and sentences for practical purposes.

While no one doubts that an ordinary command of words may be learned, there is an almost universal impression in the public mind, and has been even from the time of Aristotle

himself, that writing well or ill is almost purely a matter of talent, genius, or, let us say, instinct. It has been truly observed that the formal study of rhetoric never has made a single successful writer, and a great many writers have succeeded preëminently without ever having opened a rhetorical textbook. It has not been difficult, therefore, to come to the conclusion that writing well or ill comes by nature alone, and that all we can do is to pray for luck,—or, at the most, to practise incessantly. Write, write, write; and keep on writing; and destroy what you write and write again; cover a ton of paper with ink; some day perhaps you will succeed—says the literary adviser to the young author. And to the business man who has letters to write and wishes to write them well, no one ever says anything. The business man himself has begun to have a vague impression that he would like to improve his command of language; but who is there who even pretends to have any power to help him? There is the school grind of “grammar and composition,” and if it is kept up for enough years, and the student happens to find any point of interest in it, some good may result from it. That is the best that anyone has to offer.

Some thoughtful people are convinced that writing, even business letters, is as much a matter for professional training as music or painting or carpentry or plumbing. That view certainly seems reasonable. And against that is the conviction of the general public that use of

language is an art essentially different from any of the other arts, that all people possess it more or less, and that the degree to which they possess it depends on their general education and environment; while the few who possess it in a preëminent degree, do so by reason of peculiar endowments and talent, not to say genius. This latter view, too, is full of truth. We have only to reflect a moment to see that rhetoric as it is commonly taught can by no possibility give actual skill. Rhetoric is a system of scientific analysis. Aristotle was a scientist, not an artist. Analysis tears to pieces, divides into parts, and so destroys. The practical art of writing is wholly synthesis,—building up, putting together, creating,—and so, of course, a matter of instinct. All the dissection, or vivisection, in the world, would never teach a man how to bring a human being into the world, or any other living thing; yet the untaught instinct of all animals solves the problem of creation every minute of the world's history. In fact, it is a favorite comparison to speak of poems, stories, and other works of literary art as being the children of the writer's brain; as if works of literary art came about in precisely the same simple, yet mysterious, way that children are conceived and brought into the world.

Yet the comparison must not be pushed too far, and we must not lose sight of the facts in the case. You and I were not especially endowed with literary talent. Perhaps we are business

men and are glad we are not so endowed. But we want to write and speak better than we do,—if possible, better than those with whom we have to compete. Now, is there not a practical way in which we can help ourselves? There is no thought that we shall become geniuses, or anything of the kind. For us, why should there be any difference between plumbing and writing? If all men were born plumbers, still some would be much better than others, and no doubt the poor ones could improve their work in a great measure, simply by getting hints and trying. However, we all know that the trying will not do *very* much good without the hints. Now, where are the master-plumber's hints—or rather, the master-writer's hints, for the apprentice writer?

No doubt some half million unsuccessful authors will jump to their feet on the instant and offer their services. But the business man is not convinced of their ability to help him. Nor does he expect very much real help from the hundred thousand school teachers who teach "grammar and composition" in the schools. The fact is, the rank and file of teachers in the common schools have learned just enough to know that they want help themselves. Probably there is not a more eager class in existence than they.

The stock advice of successful authors is, Practise. But unluckily I have practised, and it does not seem to do any good. "I write one hundred long letters (or rather dictate them to my stenographer) every day," says the business man. "My

newspaper reports would fill a hundred splendid folios," says the newspaper man, "and yet—and yet—I can't seem to hit it when I write a novel." No, practice without guidance will not do very much, especially if we happen to be of the huge class of the uninspired. Our lack of genius, however, does not seem to be a reason why we should continue utterly ignorant of the art of making ourselves felt as well as heard when we use words. Here again use of language differs somewhat from painting or music, for unless we had some talent there would be no reason for attempting those arts.

Let us attack our problem from a common-sense point of view. How have greater writers learned to write? How do plumbers learn plumbing?

The process by which plumbers learn is simple. They watch the master-plumber, and then try to do likewise, and they keep at this for two or three years. At the end they are themselves master-plumbers, or at least masters of plumbing.

The method by which great writers, especially great writers who didn't start with a peculiar genius, have learned to write is much the same. Take Stevenson, for instance: he says he "played the sedulous ape." He studied the masterpieces of literature, and tried to imitate them. He kept at this for several years. At the end he was a master himself. We have reason to believe that the same was true of Thackeray, of Dumas, of Cooper, of Balzac, of Lowell. All these men

owe their skill very largely to practice in imitation of other great writers, and often of writers not as great as they themselves. Moreover, no one will accuse any of these writers of not being original in the highest degree. To imitate a dozen or fifty great writers never makes imitators; the imitator, so called, is the person who imitates but one. To imitate even two destroys all the bad effects of imitation.

Franklin, himself a great writer, well describes the method in his autobiography:

How Franklin Learned to Write.

"A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of the opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, having a ready plenty of words, and sometimes, as I thought, I was vanquished more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters on a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the subject in dispute, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in

correct spelling and pointing (which I owed to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method, and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor an improvement.

“About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished if possible to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses, since the continued search for words of the same import, but of different length to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the

tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again.

"I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order before I began to form the full sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of the thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered my faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying, that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think that I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer; of which I was extremely ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work, or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still continued to consider a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it."

A Practical Method.

Aristotle's method, though perfect in theory, has failed in practice. Franklin's method is too elementary and undeveloped to be of general use. Taking Aristotle's method (represented by our

standard textbooks on rhetoric) as our guide, let us develop Franklin's method into a system as varied and complete as Aristotle's. We shall then have a method at the same time practical and scholarly.

We have studied the art of writing words correctly (spelling) and writing sentences correctly (grammar).^{*} Now we wish to learn to write sentences, paragraphs, and entire compositions *effectively*.

First, we must form the habit of observing the meanings and values of words, the structure of sentences, of paragraphs, and of entire compositions as we read standard literature—just as we have been trying to form the habit of observing the spelling of words, and the logical relationships of words in sentences. In order that we may know what to look for in our observation we must analyse a *little*, but we will not imagine that we shall learn to do a thing by endless talk about doing it.

Second, we will practise in the imitation of selections from master writers, in every case fixing our attention on the rhetorical element each particular writer best illustrates. This imitation will be continued until we have mastered the subject toward which we are especially directing our attention, and all the subjects which go to the making of an accomplished writer.

Third, we will finally make independent compositions for ourselves with a view to studying and

^{*}See the earlier volumes in this series.

expressing the stock of ideas which we have to express. This will involve a study of the people on whom we wish to impress our ideas, and require that we constantly test the results of our work to see what the actual effect on the mind of our audience is.

Let us now begin our work.

CHAPTER I.

DICTION.

"Diction" is derived from the Latin *dictio*, a word, and in rhetoric it denotes choice of words. In the study of grammar we have learned that all words have logical relationships in sentences, and in some cases certain forms to agree with particular relationships. We have also taken note of "idioms," in which words are used with peculiar values.

On the subject of idiom Arlo Bates in his book "On Writing English" has some very forcible remarks. Says he, "An idiom is the personal—if the word may be allowed—the personal idiosyncrasy of a language. It is a method of speech wherein the genius of the race making the language shows itself as differing from that of all other peoples. What style is to the man, that is idiom to the race. It is the crystalization in verbal forms of peculiarities of race temperament—perhaps even of race eccentricities English which is not idiomatic becomes at once formal and lifeless, as if the tongue were already

dead and its remains embalmed in those honorable sepulchres, the philological dictionaries. On the other hand, English which goes too far, and fails of a delicate distinction between what is really and essentially idiomatic and what is colloquial, becomes at once vulgar and utterly wanting in that subtle quality of dignity for which there is no better term than *distinction*." *

We therefore see that idiom is not only a thing to justify, but something to strive for with all our might. The use of it gives character to our selection of words, and better than anything else illustrates what we should be looking for in forming our habit of observing the meanings and uses of words as we read.

Another thing we ought to note in our study of words is the *suggestion* which many words carry with them in addition to their obvious meaning. For instance, consider what a world of ideas the mere name of Lincoln or Washington or Franklin or Napoleon or Christ calls up. On their face they are but names of men, or possibly sometimes of places; but we cannot utter the name of Lincoln without thinking of the whole terrible struggle of our Civil War; the name of Washington, without thinking of nobility, patriotism, and self-sacrifice in a pure and great

*As examples of idioms Mr. Bates gives the following: A ten-foot (instead of ten-feet) pole; the use of the "flat adverb" or adjective form in such expressions as "speak loud," "walk fast," "the sun shines hot," "drink deep;" and the use of prepositions adverbially at the end of a sentence, as in "Where are you going to?" "The subject which I spoke to you about," etc.

man; Napoleon, without thinking of ambition and blood; of Christ, without lifting our eyes to the sky in an attitude of worship and thanksgiving to God. So common words carry with them a world of suggested thought. The word *drunk* calls up a picture horrid and disgusting; *violet* suggests blueness, sweetness, and innocence; *oak* suggests sturdy courage and strength; *love* suggests all that is dear in the histories of our own lives. Just what will be suggested depends largely on the person who hears the word, and in thinking of suggestion we must reflect also on the minds of the persons to whom we speak.

The best practical exercise for the enlargement of one's vocabulary is translating, or writing verses. Franklin commends verse-writing, but it is hardly mechanical enough to be of value in all cases. At the same time, many people are not in a position to translate from a foreign language; and even if they were, the danger of acquiring foreign idioms and strange uses of words is so great as to offset the positive gain. But we can easily exercise ourselves in translating one kind of English into another, as poetry into prose, or an antique style into modern. To do this the constant use of the English dictionary will be necessary, and incidentally we shall learn a great deal about words.

As an example of this method of study, we subjoin a series of notes on the passage quoted from Franklin in the last chapter. In our study we constantly ask ourselves, "Does this use of the

word sound perfectly natural?" At every point we appeal to our *instinct*, and in time come to trust it to a very great extent. We even train it. To train our instinct for words is the first great object of our study.

Notes on Franklin.

(See "How Franklin Learned to Write" in preceding chapter.)

1. "The female sex" includes animals as well as human beings, and in modern times we say simply "women," though when Franklin wrote "the female sex" was considered an elegant phrase.

2. Note that "their" refers to the collective noun "sex."

3. If we confine the possessive case to persons we would not say "for dispute's sake," and indeed "for the sake of dispute" is just as good, if not better, in other respects.

4. "Ready plenty" is antique usage for "ready abundance." Which is the stronger?

5. "Reasons" in the phrase "strength of his reasons" is a simple and forcible substitute for "arguments."

6. "Copied fair" shows an idiomatic use of an adjective form which perhaps can be justified, but the combination has given way in these days to "made a fair copy of."

7. Observe that Franklin uses "pointing" for *punctuation*, and "printing-house" for *printing-office*.

8. The old idiom "endeavor at improvement" has been changed to *endeavor to improve*, or *endeavor to make improvement*.

9. Note how the use of the word *sentiment* has changed. We would be more likely to say *ideas* in a connection like this.

10. For "laid them by," say *laid them away*.

11. For "laid me under.....necessity" we might say *compelled me*, or *made it necessary that I should*.

12. "Amended" is not so common now as *corrected*.

13. For "evading" (attendance at public worship) we should now say *avoiding*. We "evade" more subtle things than attendance at church.

There are many other slight differences in the use of words which the student will observe. It would be an excellent exercise to write out, not only this passage, but a number of others from the Autobiography, in the most perfect of simple modern English.

We may also take a modern writer like Kipling and translate his style into simple, yet attractive and good prose; and the same process may be applied to any of the selections in this book, simply trying to find equivalent and if possible equally good words to express the same ideas, or slight variations of the same ideas. Robinson Crusoe, Bacon's Essays, and Pilgrim's Progress are excellent books to translate into modern prose. The chief thing is to do the work slowly and thoughtfully.

CHAPTER II.

FIGURES OF SPEECH.

It is not an easy thing to pass from the logical precision of grammar to the vague suggestiveness of words that call up whole troops of ideas not contained in the simple idea for which a word stands. Specific idioms are themselves at variance with grammar and logic, and the grammarians are forever fighting them; but when we go into the vague realm of poetic style, the logical mind is lost at once.

And yet it is more important to use words pregnant with meaning than to be strictly grammatical. We must reduce grammar to an instinct that will guard us against being contradictory or crude in our construction of sentences, and then we shall make that instinct harmonize with all the other instincts which a successful writer must have. When grammar is treated (as we have tried to treat it) as "logical instinct," then there can be no conflict with other instincts.

The suggestiveness of words finds its specific embodiment in the so called "figures of speech." We must examine them a little, because when we come to such an expression as "The kettle boils" after a few lessons in tracing logical connections, we are likely to say without hesitation that we have found an error, an absurdity. On its face it is an absurdity to say "The kettle boils" when we mean "The water in the kettle boils." But

reflection will show us that we have merely condensed our words a little. Many idioms are curious condensations, and many figures of speech may be explained as natural and easy condensations. We have already seen such a condensation in "more complete" for "more nearly complete."

The following definitions and illustrations are for reference. We do not need to know the names of any of these figures in order to use them, and it is altogether probable that learning to name and analyse them will to some extent make us too self-conscious to use them at all. At the same time, they will help us to explain things that otherwise might puzzle us in our study.

1. **Simile.** The simplest figure of speech is the *simile*. It is nothing more or less than a direct comparison by the use of such words as *like* and *as*.

Examples: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. How often would I have gathered my children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings! The Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed, is like leaven hidden in three measures of meal. Their lives glide on like rivers that water the woodland. Mercy droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath.

2. **Metaphor.** A *metaphor* is an implied or assumed comparison. The words *like* and *as* are no longer used, but the construction of the sentence is such that the comparison is taken for

granted and the thing to which comparison is made is treated as if it were the thing itself.

Examples: The valiant taste of death but once. Stop my house's ears. His strong mind reeled under the blow. The compressed passions of a century exploded in the French Revolution. It was written at a white heat. He can scarcely keep the wolf from the door. Strike while the iron is hot. Murray's eloquence never blazed into sudden flashes, but its clear, placid, and mellow splendor was never overclouded.

The metaphor is the commonest figure of speech. Our language is a sort of burying-ground of faded metaphors. Look up in the dictionary the etymology of such words as *obvious*, *ruminating*, *insuperable*, *dainty*, *ponder*, etc., and you will see that they got their present meanings through metaphors which have now so faded that we no longer recognize them.

Sometimes we get into trouble by introducing two comparisons in the same sentence or paragraph, one of which contradicts the other. Thus should we say "Pilot us through the wilderness of life" we would introduce two figures of speech, that of a ship being piloted and that of a caravan in a wilderness being guided, which would contradict each other. This is called a "mixed metaphor."

3. **Allusion.** Sometimes a metaphor consists in a reference or allusion to a well known passage in literature or a fact of history.

Examples: Daily, with souls that cringe and

plot, we Sinais climb and know it not. (Reference to Moses on Mt. Sinai). He received the lion's share of the profits. (Reference to the fable of the lion's share). Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed by a kiss. (Reference to the betrayal of Christ by Judas).

4. **Personification.** Sometimes the metaphor consists in speaking of inanimate things or animals as if they were human. This is called the figure of *personification*. It raises the lower to the dignity of the higher, and so gives it more importance.

Examples: Earth felt the wound. Next Anger rushed, his eyes on fire. The moping Owl doth to the Moon complain. True Hope is swift and flies with swallow's wings. Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, as to be hated needs but to be seen. Speckled Vanity will sicken soon and die.

(Note in the next to the last example that the purely impersonal is raised, not to human level, but to that of the brute creation. Still the figure is called personification).

5. **Apostrophe.** When inanimate things, or the absent, whether living or dead, are addressed as if they were living and present, we have a figure of speech called *apostrophe*. This figure of speech gives animation to the style.

Examples: O Rome, Rome, thou hast been a tender nurse to me. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks. Take her, O Bridegroom, old and gray!

6. **Antithesis.** The preceding figures have been based on likeness. *Antithesis* is a figure of

speech in which opposites are contrasted, or one thing is set against another. Contrast is almost as powerful as comparison in making our ideas clear and vivid.

Examples: (Macaulay, more than any other writer, habitually uses antitheses). Saul, seeking his father's asses, found himself turned into a king. Fit the same intellect to a man and it is a bowstring; to a woman and it is a harp-string. I thought that this man had been a lord among wits, but I find that he is only a wit among lords. Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven. For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

7. **Metonymy.** Besides the figures of likeness and unlikeness, there are others of quite a different kind. *Metonymy* consists in the substitution for the thing itself of something closely associated with it, as the sign or symbol for the thing symbolized, the cause for the effect, the instrument for the user of it, the container for the thing contained, the material for the thing made of it, etc.

Examples: He is a slave to the *cup*. Strike for your *altars* and your *fires*. The *kettle* boils. He rose and addressed the *chair*. The *palace* should not scorn the *cottage*. The watched *pot* never boils. The red *coats* turned and fled. *Iron* hailed and *lead* rained upon the enemy. The *pen* is mightier than the *sword*.

8. **Synecdoche.** There is a special kind of metonymy which is given the dignity of a separate name. It is the substitution of the part for

the whole or the whole for the part. The value of it consists in putting forward the thing best known, the thing that will appeal most powerfully to the thought and feeling.

Examples: Come and trip it as you go, on the light fantastic *toe*. American commerce is carried in British *bottoms*. He bought a hundred *head* of cattle. It is a village of five hundred *chimneys*. He cried, "A *sail*, a *sail*!" The busy *fingers* toil on.

Exercise.

Indicate the figure of speech used in each of the following sentences: 1. Come, seeling Night, scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day. 2. The coat does not make the man. 3. From two hundred observatories in Europe and America, the glorious artillery of science nightly assaults the skies. 4. The lamp is burning. 5. Blow, blow, thou winter wind, thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude. 6. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff. 7. Laughter and tears are meant to turn the wheels of the machinery of sensibility; one is wind power, the other water power. 8. When you are an anvil, hold you still; when you are a hammer, strike your fill. 9. Save the ermine from pollution. 10. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their lives is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Turn each of the above sentences into plain language. Key: (the numbers in parentheses indicate the figure of speech in the sentences as numbered above). 1. (4); 2. (7); 3. (2); 4. (7); 5. (5); 6. (1); 7. (2 and 6); 8. (2 and 6); 9. (7); 10. (2).

CHAPTER III. STYLE.

There have been many definitions of style; but the disputes of the rhetoricians do not concern us. *Style*, as the word is commonly understood, is the choice and arrangement of words in sentences and of sentences in paragraphs as that arrangement is effective in expressing our meaning and convincing our readers or hearers. A *good style* is one that is effective, and a *bad style* is one which fails of doing what the writer wishes to do. There are as many ways of expressing ideas as there are ways of combining words (that is, an infinite number), and as many styles as there are writers. None of us wishes precisely to get the style of any one else; but we want to form a good one of our own.

We will briefly note the elements mentioned by those who analyse style, and then pass on to concrete examples.

Arrangement of words in a sentence. The first requirement is that the arrangement of words should be logical, that is grammatical. The rhetorical requirements are that—

1. One sentence, with one principal subject and one principal predicate, should try to express one thought and no more. If we try to mix two thoughts in the same sentence, we shall come to grief. Likewise, we shall fail if we attempt to mix two subjects in the same paragraph or composition.

2. The words in the sentence should be so arranged that those which are emphatic will come in the emphatic places. The beginning and the end of a sentence are emphatic positions, the place before any mark of punctuation is usually emphatic, and any word not in its usual place with relation to the word it modifies grammatically is especially emphatic. We must learn the emphatic positions by experience, and then our instinct will guide us. The whole subject is one of the relative values of words.

3. The words in a sentence should follow each other in such a simple, logical order that one leads on to another, and the whole meaning flows like a stream of water. The reader should never be compelled to stop and look back to see how the various ideas "hang together." This is the rhetorical side of the logical relationship which grammar requires. Not only must grammatical rules be obeyed, but logical instinct must be satisfied with the linking of idea to idea to make a complete thought. And the same law holds good in linking sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into whole compositions.

These three requirements have been named Unity, Mass, and Coherence.

The variations in sentences due to emphasis have given rise to a rhetorical division of sentences into two classes, called *loose* and *periodic*.

A *loose* sentence is one in which words follow each other in their natural order, the modifiers of the verb of course following the verb. Often

many of these modifiers are not strictly necessary to complete the sense and a period may be inserted at some point before the close of the sentence without destroying its grammatical completeness. The addition of phrases and clauses not strictly required constitutes *looseness* of sentence structure.

A **periodic sentence** is one which is not grammatically or logically complete till the end. If the sentence is somewhat long, the mind is held in suspense until the last word is uttered.

Example. The following is a loose sentence: "I stood on the bridge at midnight, as the clocks were striking the hour." The same sentence becomes periodic by transposition of the less important predicate modifiers, thus—"At midnight, as the clocks were striking the hour, I stood on the bridge."

It will be observed that the periodic form is adapted to oratory and similiar forms of eloquent writing in which the mind of the reader or hearer is keyed up to a high pitch of expectancy; while the loose sentence is the one common in all simple narrative and unexcited statement.

Qualities of Style. Writers on rhetoric note three essential qualities of style, namely *clearness*, *force*, and *elegance*.

Clearness of style is the direct result of clearness and simplicity of thought. Unless we have mastered our thought in every particular before trying to express it, confusion is inevitable. At the same time, if we have mastered our thought

perfectly, and yet express it in language not understood by the persons to whom and for whom we write or speak, our style will not be clear to them, and we shall have failed in conveying our thoughts as much as if we had never mastered them.

Force is required to produce an effect on the mind of the hearer. He must not only understand what we say, but have some emotion in regard to it; else he will have forgotten our words before we have fairly uttered them. Force is the appeal which words make to the feeling, as clearness is the appeal they make to the understanding.

Elegance is required only in writing which purports to be good literature. It is useful but not required in business letters, or in newspaper writing; but it is absolutely essential to higher literary art. It is the appeal which the words chosen and the arrangement selected make to our sense of beauty. That which is not beautiful has no right to be called "literature," and a style which does not possess the subtle elements of beauty is not a strictly "literary" style.

Most of us by persistent effort can conquer the subject of clearness. Even the humblest person should not open his mouth or take up his pen voluntarily unless he can express himself clearly; and if he has any thought to express that is worth expressing, and wants to express it, he will sooner or later find a satisfactory way of expressing it.

The thing that most of us wish to find out is, how to write with force. Force is attained in

various ways, summarized as follows:

1. By using words which are in themselves expressive.

2. By placing those words in emphatic positions in the sentence.

3. By varying the length and form of successive sentences so that the reader or hearer shall never be wearied by monotony.

4. By figures of speech, or constant comparison and illustration, and making words suggest ten times as much as they say.

5. By keeping persistently at one idea, though from every possible point of view and without repetition of any kind, till that idea has sunk into the mind of the hearer and has been fully comprehended.

Force is destroyed by the—

Vice of repetition with slight change or addition;

Vice of monotony in the words, sentences or paragraphs;

Vice of over-literality and exactness;

Vice of trying to emphasize more than one thing at a time;

Vice of using many words with little meaning; or words barren of suggestiveness and destitute of figures of speech; and its opposite, the

Vice of overloading the style with so many figures of speech and so much suggestion and variety as to disgust or confuse.

These vices have been named tautology, dryness, and "fine writing."

Without doubt the simplest narration is the hardest kind of composition to write, chiefly because we do not realize how hard it is. The first necessity for a student is to realize the enormous requirements for a perfect mastery of style. The difficulties will not appear to the one who tries original composition by way of practice, since there is no way of "checking up" his work. He may (or may not) be aware that what he is doing does not produce the effect that the writing of a master produces; but if he does realize it, he will certainly fail to discover wherein his own weakness consists.

The only effective way of making the discovery is that described by Franklin, and there is no masterpiece of literature better to practise upon than Ruskin's "The King of the Golden River." Unlike much beautiful and powerful writing, it is so simple that a child can understand it. Complete comprehension of the meaning is absolutely necessary before any skill in expressing that meaning can be looked for, and an attempt to imitate that which is not perfectly clear will not give skill. And with this simplicity there is consummate art. Ruskin uses nearly all the devices described in the preceding pages. Let us look at some of these in the first three paragraphs of Ruskin's story:

Ruskin's "King of the Golden River."

In a secluded and mountainous part of Styria, there was, in old time, a valley of most surprising and luxuriant fertility. It was surrounded on all sides

by steep and rocky mountains rising into peaks which were always covered with snow and from which a number of torrents descended in constant cataracts. One of these fell westward, over the face of a crag so high that, when the sun had set to everything else, and all below was darkness, his beams still shone full upon this waterfall, so that it looked like a shower of gold. It was, therefore, called by the people of the neighborhood the Golden River. It was strange that none of these streams fell into the valley itself. They all descended on the other side of the mountains, and wound through broad plains and by populous cities. But the clouds were drawn so constantly to the snowy hills, and rested so softly in the circular hollow, that, in time of drought and heat, when all the country round was burnt up, there was still rain in the little valley; and its crops were so heavy, and its hay so high, and its apples so red, and its grapes so blue, and its wine so rich, and its honey so sweet, that it was a marvel to every one who beheld it, and was commonly called the Treasure Valley.

The whole of this little valley belonged to three brothers, called Schwartz, Hans, and Gluck. Schwartz and Hans, the two elder brothers, were very ugly men, with overwhelming eyebrows and small, dull eyes, which were always half shut, so that you couldn't see into them, and always fancied they saw very far into *you*. They lived by farming the Treasure Valley, and very good farmers they were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the black-birds, because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedge-hogs, lest they should suck the cows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen; and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime-trees. They worked their serv-

ants without any wages, till they could not work any more, and then quarrelled with them and turned them out of doors without paying them. It would have been very odd, if, with such a farm, and such a system of farming, they hadn't got very rich; and very rich they *did* get.

They generally contrived to keep their corn by them till it was very dear, and then sell it for twice its value; they had heaps of gold lying about on their floors, yet it was never known that they had given so much as a penny or a crust in charity; they never went to mass; grumbled perpetually at paying tithes; and were, in a word, of so cruel and grinding a temper, as to receive from all those with whom they had any dealings, the nickname of the "Black Brothers."

The youngest brother, Gluck, was as completely opposed, in both appearance and character, to his seniors as could possibly be imagined or desired. He was not above twelve years old, fair, blue-eyed, and kind in temper to every living thing. He did not, of course, agree particularly well with his brothers, or rather they did not agree with him. He was usually appointed to the honorable office of turnspit, when there was anything to roast, which was not often; for, to do the brothers justice, they were hardly less sparing upon themselves than upon other people. At other times he used to clean the shoes, the floors, and sometimes the plates, occasionally getting what was left on them, by way of encouragement, and a wholesome quantity of dry blows, by way of education.

The author starts out with a periodic sentence, beginning with a predicate modifier and placing the subject last. This serves to fix our attention from the first. The arrangement also throws the

emphasis on "surprising and luxuriant fertility." The last word is the essential one in conveying the meaning, though a modifier of the simple subject noun "valley." The next sentence is a loose one. After catching the attention of the reader, we must not burden his mind too much till he gets interested. We must move along naturally and easily, and this Ruskin does. The third sentence is periodic again. We are now awake and able to bear transposition for the sake of emphasis. Ruskin first emphasizes "so high," the adjective being placed after its noun, and then leads the way to the chief emphasis, which comes on the word "gold," the last in the sentence. There is also an antithesis between the darkness below and the light on the peak which is bright enough to turn the water into gold. This also helps to emphasize "gold." We have now had three long sentences and the fourth sentence, which concludes this portion of the subject, is a short one. "Golden River" is emphasized by being thrown quite to the end, a little out of its natural order, which would have been immediately after the verb. The emphasis on "gold" in the preceding sentence prepared the way for the emphasis on "Golden River;" and by looking back we see how every word has been easily, gracefully leading up to this conclusion.

Ordinarily this would be the end of a paragraph. We may call the first four sentences a "sub-paragraph." The capital letters in "Golden River" mark the division to the eye, and the

emphasis marks the division to the mind. We do not begin with a new paragraph, simply because the subject that follows is more closely connected with the first four sentences than with the paragraph which follows.

Beginning with "It was strange that none of these streams" etc., we have two rather short, simple, loose sentences, which introduce us in a most natural manner to the subject to be presented, and prepare the way for a very long, somewhat complicated sentence, full of antitheses, ending with the emphatic words "Treasure Valley." These two words are to this part of the paragraph what the words "Golden River" were to the first part; and besides, we see before us the simple, beautiful picture of the Golden River above the Treasure Valley, presented in words whose power and grace we cannot fail to appreciate.

The second paragraph goes forward in the most matter-of-course and easy way. The first sentence is short, but the second is longer, with a pleasing variation of long and short phrases, and it ends with a contrast marked to the eye by the italic words "*them*" and "*you*." The next two sentences are quite short, and variety is given by the simple transposition in "and very good farmers they were." This is no more than a graceful little twirl to relieve any possible monotony. The fourth sentence in the paragraph is also very short, purposely made so for emphasis. It gives in a word what the following long sentence presents in detail. And observe the constant variation in the

form of this long sentence: In the first clause we have "They shot.....because," in the second, "and killed.....lest" (the subject of *killed* being implied, but its place supplied by *and*), while in the third, the subject of the verb is again expressed, and then we have the prepositional form "for eating" instead of the conjunction and verb in a subordinate sentence. Moreover we have three different verbs meaning the same thing—*shot, killed, poisoned*. By the variation Ruskin avoids monotony; yet by the similiarity he gains emphasis. The likeness of the successive clauses is as important as their difference. There is also in each an implied contrast, between the severe penalty and the slight offense. By implication each word gives an added touch to the picture of hardness and cruelty of the two brothers. Ruskin finds a dozen different ways of illustrating the important statement he made in the second sentence (the first sentence being merely introductory). And at the end of the paragraph we have the whole summed up in a long sentence full of deliberate rather than implied contrasts, which culminate in the two words "Black Brothers."

It is easy to see that much of the strength of these two paragraphs lies in the continued and repeated use of contrast. The first paragraph, with its beautiful description of the "Golden River" and the "Treasure Valley," is itself a perfect contrast to the second, with its "Black Brothers" and all their meanness; and we have already seen that the second paragraph itself is filled with antitheses.

In these two paragraphs we have but two simple ideas, that of the place with all its beauty, and that of the brothers with all their ugliness. Ruskin might have spoken of them in two sentences, or even in one; but as a matter of fact, in order to make us think long enough about these two things, he takes them one at a time and gives us glints, like the reflections from the different facets of a diamond slowly turned about in the light. Each is almost like the preceding, yet a little different; and when we have seen all in succession, we understand each better, and the whole subject is vividly impressed on our minds.

In the third paragraph we have still another contrast in the description of little Gluck. This paragraph is shorter, but the same devices are used that we found in the preceding.

In these three paragraphs the following points are well illustrated:

1. Each paragraph develops one subject, which has a natural relation to what precedes and what follows;
2. Each idea is presented in a succession of small details which follow in easy, logical order one after the other;
3. There is constant variety and contrast, difference with likeness and likeness with difference.

CHAPTER IV.

HUMOR:

Addison, Stevenson, Lamb.

Mere correctness in sentence structure (grammar) may be purely scientific; but the art of rhetoric is so wrapped up with human emotion that the study of human nature counts for infinitely more than the theory of arrangement, figures of speech, etc., Unless the student has some idea how the human mind works (his own mind and the minds of his readers), he will make little or no progress in his study of this subject. Professional teachers ignore this almost completely, and that is one reason why they so often fail; and it is also a reason why persons who do not go to them for training so often succeed: the latter class finds that knowledge of the human heart makes up for many deficiencies.

The first important consideration is *good nature*. It is not often that we can use words to compel; we must win; and it is an old proverb that "more flies are caught with molasses than with vinegar." The novice in writing is always too serious, even to morbidness, too "fierce," too arrogant and domineering in his whole thought and feeling. Sometimes such a person compels attention, but not often. The universal way is to attract, win over, please. Most of the arts of formal rhetoric are arts of making language pleasing; but what is the value of knowing the theory

in regard to these devices when the spirit of pleasing is absent?

We must go at our work gently and good-naturedly, and then there will be no straining or morbidness or repulsiveness of manner. But all this finds its consummation in what is called *humor*.

Humor is a thing that can be cultivated, even learned; and it is one of the most important things in the whole art of writing.

We will not attempt to say just what humor is. The effort could bring no results of value. Suffice it to say that there is implanted in most of us a sense of the ridiculous—of the incongruous. If a thing is a little too big or a little too small for the place it is intended to fill, for some occult reason we regard it as funny. The difference of a hair seems to tickle us, whereas a great difference does not produce that kind of effect at all.

We may secure humor by introducing into our writing the slightest possible exaggeration which will result in the slightest possible incongruity. Of course this presupposes that we understand the facts in a most thorough and delicate way. Our language is not precisely representative of things as they are, but it proves better than any other language that we know just what the truth is.

Humor is the touchstone by which we ought to try ourselves and our work. It will prevent our getting very far away from what is normal and natural.

So much for its effect on ourselves. To our

readers it proves that we are good-natured, honest, and determined to be agreeable. Besides, it makes an appeal to them on their weakest side. Few people can resist a joke. There is never any occasion for them to cultivate resistance. So there is no more certain way by which we can get quickly and inevitably into their confidence and fellowship. When once we are on good terms with them they will listen to us while we say anything we may have to say. Of course we shall often have many serious things to say; but humor will open the way for us to say them better than any other agency.

It is to be noted that humor is slighter and more delicate than any other form of wit, and that it is used by serious and accomplished writers. It is the element of success in nearly all essay-writing, especially in letters; and the business man will find it his most powerful weapon in advertising. Its value is to be seen by uses so various.

The student is invited to study three examples of humor. The first is Addison's "Advice in Love." It is obvious that this subject could not very well be treated in any other way. It is too delicate for anything but delicate humor, for humor can handle subjects which would be impossible for any other kind of language. Besides, the sentiment would be likely to nauseate us by its excess or its morbidity, except for the healthy salt of humor. Humor makes this essay instructive and interesting.

Next we present two letters from Stevenson. Here we see that humor makes commonplace things interesting. How deadly dull would be the details Stevenson gives in these letters but for the enlivenment of humor! By what other method could anything worth reading have been gotten out of the facts?

The selection from Charles Lamb is an illustration of how humor may save the utterly absurd from being unreadable. Lamb had absolutely nothing to say when he sat down to write this letter; and yet he contrived to be amusing, if not actually interesting. The master of humor can draw upon the riches of his own mind, and thereby embellish and enliven any subject he may desire to write upon.

Of these three selections, the easiest to imitate is Addison. First, we should note the old-fashioned phrasing and choice of words, and perhaps translate Addison into simple, idiomatic, modern English, altering as little as possible. We note that the letter offered by Addison is purposely filled with all the faults of rhetoric which we never find in his own writing. Addison's humorous imitation of these faults gives us twice as good a lesson as any possible example of real faults made by some writer unconsciously.

In Stevenson's letters we see the value of what has been called "the magic word." Nearly the whole of his humor consists in selecting a word which suggests ten times as much as it expresses on its face. There is a whole world of fun in this

suggestion. Sometimes it is merely commonplace punning, as when he speaks of the "menial" of "high Dutch extraction" as yet "only partially extracted;" and again it is the delicate insinuation contained in spelling "Parc" with a c, for that one letter gives us an entire foreign atmosphere, and the disproportion between the smallness of the letter and the extent of the suggestiveness touches our sense of the ridiculous.

The form of study of these passages may be slightly altered. Instead of making notes and re-writing exactly as the original authors wrote, we should keep the original open before us and try to produce something slightly different in the same vein. We may suppose the letter on love written by a man instead of by a woman. Of course its character will be quite different, though exactly the same characteristics will be illustrated. This change will require an alteration in almost every sentence of the essay. Our effort should be to see how little change in the wording will be required by this one change in subject; though of course we should always modernize the phrasing. In the case of Stevenson, we may suppose that we are writing a similar letter to friends, but from some other city than San Francisco. We may imitate Lamb by describing our feelings when afflicted by some other ailment than a cold.

ADVICE IN LOVE.

By Joseph Addison.

It is an old observation, which has been made of politicians who would rather ingratiate themselves

with their sovereign, than promote his real service, that they accommodate their counsels to his inclinations, and advise him to such actions only as his heart is naturally set upon. The privy-counsellor of one in love must observe the same conduct, unless he would forfeit the friendship of the person who desires his advice. I have known several odd cases of this nature. Hipparchus was going to marry a common woman, but being resolved to do nothing without the advice of his friend Philander, he consulted him upon the occasion. Philander told him his mind freely, and represented his mistress to him in such strong colors, that the next morning he received a challenge for his pains, and before twelve o'clock was run through the body by the man who had asked his advice. Celia was more prudent on the like occasion; she desired Leonilla to give her opinion freely upon a young fellow who made his addresses to her. Leonilla, to oblige her, told her with great frankness, that she looked upon him as one of the most worthless—Celia, foreseeing what a character she was to expect, begged her not to go on, for that she had been privately married to him above a fortnight. The truth of it is a woman seldom asks advice before she has bought her wedding clothes. When she has made her own choice, for form's sake she sends a *congé d'élire* to her friends.

If we look into the secret springs and motives that set people at work on these occasions, and put them upon asking advice, which they never intend to take; I look upon it to be none of the least, that they are incapable of keeping a secret which is so very pleasing to them. A girl longs to tell her confidant that she hopes to be married in a little time, and, in order to talk of the pretty fellow that dwells so much in

her thoughts, asks her gravely, what she would advise her to in a case of so much difficulty. Why else should Melissa, who had not a thousand pounds in the world, go into every quarter of the town to ask her acquaintancē whether they would advise her to take Tom Townly, that made his addresses to her with an estate of five thousand a year? 'Tis very pleasant on this occasion to hear the lady propose her doubts, and to see the pains she is at to get over them.

I must not here omit a practice that is in use among the vainer part of our own sex, who will often ask a friend's advice, in relation to a fortune whom they are never likely to come at. Will Honeycomb, who is now on the verge of threescore, took me aside not long since, and ask me in his most serious look, whether I would advise him to marry my Lady Betty Single, who, by the way, is one of the greatest fortunes about town. I stared him full in the face upon so strange a question; upon which he immediately gave me an inventory of her jewels and estate, adding, that he was resolved to do nothing in a matter of such consequence without my approbation. Finding he would have an answer, I told him, if he could get the lady's consent, he had mine. This is about the tenth match which, to my knowledge, Will has consulted his friends upon, without ever opening his mind to the party herself.

I have been engaged in this subject by the following letter, which comes to me from some notable young female scribe, who, by the contents of it, seems to have carried matters so far that she is ripe for asking advice; but as I would not lose her good-will, nor forfeit the reputation which I have with her for wisdom, I shall only communicate the letter to the public, without returning any answer to it.

"Mr. Spectator,

Now, sir, the thing is this: Mr. Shapely is the prettiest gentleman about town. He is very tall, but not too tall neither. He dances like an angel. His mouth is made I do not know how, but it is the prettiest that I ever saw in my life. He is always laughing, for he has an infinite deal of wit. If you did but see how he rolls his stockings! He has a thousand pretty fancies, and I am sure, if you saw him, you would like him. He is a very good scholar, and can talk Latin as fast as English. I wish you could but see him dance. Now you must understand poor Mr. Shapely has no estate; but how can he help that, you know? And yet my friends are so unreasonable as to be always teasing me about him, because he has no estate: but I am sure he has that that is better than an estate; for he is a good-natured, ingenious, modest, civil, tall, well-bred, handsome man, and I am obliged to him for his civilities ever since I saw him. I forgot to tell you that he has black eyes, and looks upon me now and then as if he had tears in them. And yet my friends are so unreasonable, that they would have me be uncivil to him. I have a good portion which they cannot hinder me of, and I shall be fourteen on the 29th day of August next, and am therefore willing to settle in the world as soon as I can, and so is Mr. Shapely. But everybody I advise with here is poor Mr. Shapely's enemy. I desire, therefore, you will give me your advice, for I know you are a wise man; and if you advise me well, I am resolved to follow it. I heartily wish you could see him dance, and am,

"Sir, your most humble servant,

B. D."

"He loves your Spectator mightily."

Notes.

Addison's object in writing this paper is largely serious: he wishes to criticise and correct manners and morals. He is satirical, but so good-humored in his satire that no one could be offended. He also contrives to give the impression that he refers to "the other fellow," not to you. This delicacy and tact are as important in the writer as in the diplomat, for the writer quite as much as the diplomat lives by favor.

Addison is not a very strict writer, and his works have given examples for the critics by the score. One of these is seen in "begged her not to go on, *for that* she had been privately married:" "begged" and "for that" do not go well together. To a modern reader such a phrasing as "If we look into.....; I look upon it to be" etc., seems a little awkward, if not crude; but we may excuse these seeming discrepancies as "antique usage," along with such phrases as "advise her *to* in a case of such difficulty" and "to hear the lady *propose* her doubts, and to see the pains she is *at* to get over them."

"Fortune whom" is evidently a personification. The use of *party* in "to the party herself" is now reckoned an Americanism(!) "Engaged in this subject" is evidently antiquated.

We miss in Addison the variety which we found in Ruskin. He does not seem to understand the art of alternating long and short sentences, and following one sentence form by another in quick succession. The fact is, English prose style has

made enormous advances since the time of Addison, and we learn more by comparing him with a writer like Ruskin than by deliberately imitating him. At the same time his method is simpler, and since it is so we may find him a good writer to begin our study with. In spite of any little faults we may find with him, he was and is a great writer, and we should be sure we can write *as well* as he before we reject him.

LETTERS.

By Robert Louis Stevenson.

I.

My Dear Mother,—I am here at last, sitting in my room, without coat or waistcoat, and with both window and door open, and yet perspiring like a terra-cotta jug or a Gruyere cheese.

We had a very good passage, which we certainly deserved in compensation for having to sleep on the cabin floor and finding absolutely nothing fit for human food in the whole filthy embarkation. We made up for lost time by sleeping on deck a good part of the forenoon. When I awoke, Simpson was still sleeping the sleep of the just, on a coil of ropes and (as appeared afterwards) his own hat; so I got a bottle of Bass and a pipe and laid hold of an old Frenchman of somewhat filthy aspect (*fiat experimentum in corpore vili*) to try my French upon. I made very heavy weather of it. The Frenchman had a very pretty young wife; but my French always deserted me entirely when I had to answer her, and so she soon drew away and left me to her lord, who talked of French politics, Africa, and domestic economy with great vivacity. From Ostend

a smoking hot journey to Brussels! At Brussels we went off after dinner to the Parc. If any person wants to be happy, I should advise the Parc. You sit drinking iced drinks and smoking penny cigars under great old trees. The band place, covered walks, etc., are all lit up; and you can't fancy how beautiful was the contrast of the great masses of lamplit foliage and the dark sapphire night sky with just one blue star set overhead in the middle of the largest patch. In the dark walks, too, there are crowds of people whose faces you cannot see, and here and there a colossal white statue at the corner of an alley that gives the place a nice, *artificial*, eighteenth-century sentiment. There was a good deal of summer lightning blinking overhead, and the black avenues and white statues leapt out every minute into short-lived distinctness.

II.

My dear Colvin,—Any time between eight and half-past nine in the morning, a slender gentleman in an ulster, with a volume buttoned into the breast of it, may be observed leaving No. 608 Bush and descending Powell with an active step. The gentleman is R. L. S.; the volume relates to Benjamin Franklin, on whom he meditates one of his charming essays. He descends Powell, crosses Market, and descends in Sixth on a branch of the original Pine Street Coffee House, no less; I believe he would be capable of going to the original itself, if he could only find it. In the branch he seats himself at a table covered with waxcloth, and a pampered menial, of high Dutch extraction and, indeed, as yet only partially extracted, lays before him a cup of coffee, a roll, and a pat of butter, all, to quote the deity, very good. Awhile ago, and R. L. S. used to find the supply of butter insuf-

ficient; but he has now learned the art to exactitude, and butter and roll expire at the same moment. For this refection he pays ten cents, or five pence sterling (£0 0s 5d).

Half an hour later, the inhabitants of Bush Street observe the same slender gentleman armed, like George Washington, with his little hatchet, splitting kindling, and breaking coal for his fire. He does this quasi-publicly upon the window-sill; but this is not to be attributed to any love of notoriety, though he is indeed vain of his prowess with the hatchet (which he persists in calling an axe), and daily surprised at the perpetuation of his fingers. The reason is this: that the sill is a strong, supporting beam, and that blows of the same emphasis in other parts of his room might knock the entire shanty into hell. Thenceforth, for from three to four hours, he is engaged darkly with an ink-bottle. Yet he is not blacking his boots, for the only pair that he possesses are innocent of lustre and wear the natural hue of the material turned up with caked and venerable slush. The youngest child of his landlady remarks several times a day, as this strange occupant enters or quits the house, "Dere's de author." Can it be that this bright-haired innocent has found the true clue to the mystery? The being in question is, at least, poor enough to belong to that honorable craft.

Notes.

The first of these two letters by Stevenson was written very early in his literary career, the second when he may be supposed to have been at the height of his powers. It is interesting to see to what extent he had improved his style.

Note now much suggestiveness (apart from the apparent meaning) is contained in such words and phrases as "the whole filthy embarkation;" "made very heavy weather of it" (speaking French); "*Parc*"; "*artificial*" (the peculiar meaning being indicated by italicizing); "pampered menial" (the reference being to just the opposite).

There is a peculiar mechanical sort of humor in omitting the word *street* after "Bush," "Powell," etc., and in giving the cost of his meal so elaborately—"ten cents, or fivepence sterling (£0 0s 5d)."

The chief source of fun is in giving small things an importance they do not deserve. The author is making fun at himself. Of course since he makes fun at himself it is good-natured; but it must be just as good-natured if one is to make fun of any one else. Addison was so successful because no suggestion of malice ever crept into his satire.

A LETTER TO BERNARD BARTON.

By Charles Lamb.

January 9, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day-mare,—a "whoreson lethargy," Falstaff calls it,—an indisposition to do anything or to be anything; a total deadness and distaste; a suspension of vitality; an indifference to locality; a numb, soporifical good-for-nothingness; an ossification all over; an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events; a mind-stupor; a brawny de-

fiance to the needles of a thrust-in conscience? Did you ever have a very bad cold with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes? This has been for many weeks my lot and my excuse. My fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three-and-twenty furlongs from here to the end of this demi-sheet. I have not a thing to say, nothing is of more importance than another. I am flatter than a denial or a pancake; emptier than Judge Parke's wig when the head is in it; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it,—a cipher, an o! I acknowledge life at all only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest. I am weary of the world; life is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight, and I don't think it worth the expense of candles. My wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it. I inhale suffocation; I can't distinguish veal from mutton; nothing interests me. 'Tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell* is just now coming out upon the new drop, Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality; yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection. If you told me the world will be at an end to-morrow, I should say "Will it?" I have not volition enough left to dot my i's, much less to comb my eyebrows; my eyes are set in my head; my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again; my skull is a Grub-street attic to let,—not so much as a joint-stool left in it; my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are cut off. Oh for a vigorous fit of gout, colic, tooth-

*Hanged that day for the murder of Weare.

ache—an earwig* in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs; pain is life,—the sharper the more evidence of life; but this apathy, this death! Did you ever have an obstinate cold, a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything? Yet do I try all I can to cure it. I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities; but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It is just fifteen minutes after twelve. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion, perhaps. Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat; and the Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns, but on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes.

C. L.

Notes.

The danger of not adapting your method to your auditor is well illustrated by the beginning of Lamb's next letter to the same person:

"My dear sir,—That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light, —it was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold."

Lamb's letter is filled with about every figure of speech known to rhetoricians: it will be a useful exercise to pick them out.

Any person who does not have a well developed

*An ant.

sense of humor will hardly see the force of the reference to Thurtell, the murderer. It is a whimsical way of indicating by a specific example how empty the writer's brain was, forcing him to reflect on such a subject in so trivial a manner.

Observe the occasional summing up of the meaning, curiously repeating exactly the same thing—"Did you ever have a very bad cold—?" "Did you ever have an obstinate cold—?" The very short sentences summarize the very long ones. The repetition is meant to give the impression of being clumsy and stupid. In describing harshness we use words that are harsh, in describing awkwardness we use words that are awkward, in describing brightness and lightness we use words that are bright and light, in the very words themselves giving a concrete illustration of what we mean.

CHAPTER V.

RIDICULE:

Poe.

I have said that humor is good-natured and winning. This is always true, though the winning of one reader may be at the expense of some other. Humor used to win one at the expense of another is called *satire* and *sarcasm*. The simplest form of using satire and sarcasm is in direct *ridicule*.

Ridicule, satire, and sarcasm are suitable for use against an open enemy, such as a political opponent, against a public nuisance which ought

to be suppressed, or in behalf of higher ideals and standards. The one thing that makes this style of little effect is anger or morbid intensity. While some thing or some one is attacked, perhaps with ferocity, results are to be obtained by winning the reader. So it comes about that winning, good-natured humor is an essential element in really successful ridicule. If intense or morbid hatred or temper is allowed to dominate, the reader is repulsed and made distrustful, and turns away without being affected in the desired way at all.

The following, which opens a little known essay of Edgar Allan Poe's, is one of the most perfect examples of simple ridicule in the English language. We may have our doubts as to whether Poe was justified in using such withering satire on poor Mr. Channing; but we cannot help feeling that the workmanship is just what it ought to be when ridicule is employed in a proper cause. Perhaps the boosting of books into public regard by the use of great names is a proper and sufficient subject for attack by ridicule.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

By Edgar Allan Poe.

In speaking of Mr. William Ellery Channing, who has just published a very neat little volume of poems, we feel the necessity of employing the indefinite rather than the definite article. He is *a*, and by no means *the*, William Ellery Channing. He is only *the son** of the great essayist deceased. . . It may be said in his favor that nobody ever heard of him.

*Really the *nephew*.

Like an honest woman, he has always succeeded in keeping himself from being made the subject of gossip. His book contains about sixty-three things, which he calls poems, and which he no doubt seriously supposes to be such. They are full of all kinds of mistakes, of which the most important is that of their having been printed at all. They are not precisely English—nor will we insult a great nation by calling them Kickapoo; perhaps they are Channingese. We may convey some general idea of them by two foreign terms not in common use—the Italian *pavoneggiarsi*, “to strut like a peacock,” and the German word for “sky-rocketing,” *Schwarmerei*. They are more preposterous, in a word, than any poems except those of the author of “Sam Patch;” for we presume we are right (are we not?) in taking it for granted that the author of “Sam Patch” is the very worst of all the wretched poets that ever existed upon the earth.

In spite, however, of the customary phrase of a man’s “making a fool of himself,” we doubt if any one was ever a fool of his own free will and accord. A poet, therefore, should not always be taken too strictly to task. He should be treated with leniency, and even when damned, should be damned with respect. Nobility of descent, too, should be allowed its privileges not more in social life than in letters. The son of a great author cannot be handled too tenderly by the critical Jack Ketch. Mr. Channing must be hung, that’s true. He must be hung *in terrorem*—and for this there is no help under the sun; but then we shall do him all manner of justice, and observe every species of decorum, and be especially careful of his feelings, and hang him gingerly and gracefully, with a silken cord, as Spaniards hang their grandees of the blue blood, their nobles of the *sangre azul*.

To be serious, then, as we always wish to be, if possible, Mr. Channing (whom we suppose to be a *very* young man, since we are precluded from supposing him a *very* old one), appears to have been inoculated at the same moment with *virus* from Tennyson and from Carlyle, etc.

Notes.

The three paragraphs which we have quoted illustrate three different methods of using ridicule. The first is the simple one of contemptuous epithets—"calling names," as we put it in colloquial parlance. So long as it is good-humored and the writer does not show personal malice, it is a good way; but the reader soon tires of it. A sense of fairness prevents him from listening to mere calling of names very long. So in the second paragraph Poe changes his method to one more subtle: he pretends to apologize and find excuses, virtually saying to the reader, "Oh, I'm going to be perfectly fair," while at the same time the excuses are so absurd that the effect is ridicule of a still more intense and biting type. In the third paragraph Poe seems to answer the reader's mental comment to the effect that "you are merely amusing us by your clever wit" by asserting that he means to be extremely serious. He then proceeds about his business with a most solemn face, which is as amusing in literature as it is in comic representations on the stage.

In practising upon this type of writing one must select a subject that he feels to be decidedly in need of suppression. Perhaps the most im-

personal and easy subject to select for practice is a popular novel in which one can see absurdities, or certain ridiculous departments in the newspapers, such as the personal-advice column. Taking such a subject, adapt Poe's language to it with as little change as possible.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RHETORICAL, IMPASSIONED AND LOFTY STYLES:

Macaulay and De Quincey.

The familiar style of the humorist is almost universal in its availability. It is the style of conversation, to a great extent—at least of the best conversation,—of letter-writing, of essay-writing, and, in large part, of fiction. But there are moments when a different and more hard and artificial style is required. These moments are few, and many people never have them at all. Some people try to have them and thereby fall into the fault of "fine writing." But it is certainly very important that when the great moment comes we should be prepared for it. Then a lofty and more or less artificial style is demanded as imperatively as the key-stone of an arch when the arch is completed except for the key-stone. Without the ability to write one lofty sentence, all else that we have said may completely fail of its effect, however excellent in itself.

There are three kinds of prose which may be used on such occasions as we have described. The lowest and most common of these, as it is the

most artificial and most easily acquired, is the *rhetorical*, or oratorical, style, the style of all orators, the style which is called eloquence. Of course we may find specimens of it in actual oratory, but it is best illustrated in its use for written compositions in Macaulay. The next variety, more rarely used, was especially developed if not actually invented by De Quincey and was called by him *impassioned prose*. It would seem at first that language could go no higher; but it does mount a little higher simply by trying to do less, and we have *loftiness* in its plain simplicity, as when man stands bareheaded and humble in the presence of God alone.

Macaulay's style is highly artificial, but its roundity, its movement, its impressive sweep have made it popular. Almost any one can acquire some of its features; but the ease with which it is acquired makes it dangerous in a high degree, for the writer becomes fascinated with it and uses it far too often. It is true that Macaulay used it practically all the time; but it is very doubtful if Macaulay would have succeeded so well with it to-day, when the power of simplicity is so much better understood.

De Quincey's "impassioned prose" was an attempt on his part to imitate the effects of poetry in prose. Without doubt he succeeded wonderfully; but the art is so difficult that no one else has equalled him and prose of the kind that he wrote is not often written. Still, it is worth while to try to catch some of his skill. He be-

gan to write this kind of composition in "The Confessions of an English Opium Eater," but he reached perfection only in some compositions intended as sequels to that book, namely, "Suspiria de Profundis," and "The English Mail Coach," with its "Vision of Sudden Death," and "Dream-Fugue" upon the theme of sudden death.

What we should strive for above all is the mighty effect of simple and bare loftiness of thought. Masters of this style have not been few, and they seem to slip into it with a sudden and easy upward sweep that can be compared to nothing so truly as to the upward flight of an eagle. They mount because their spirits are lofty. No one who has not a lofty thought has any occasion to write the lofty style; and such a person will usually succeed best by paying very little attention to the manner when he actually comes to write of high ideas. Still, the lofty style should be studied and mastered like any other.

It is to be noted that all these styles are applicable chiefly if not altogether to description. Narration may become intense at times, but its intensity demands no especial alteration of style. Dialogue, too, may be lofty, but only in dramas of passion, and very few people are called upon to write these. But it is often necessary to indicate a loftier, a more serious atmosphere, and this is effected by description of surrounding details in an elevated manner.

One of the most natural, simple, and graceful

of lofty descriptions may be found in Ruskin's "King of the Golden River," Chapter III, where he pictures the mountain scenery:

It was, indeed, a morning that might have made any one happy, even with no Golden River to seek for. Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massy mountains,—their lower cliffs in pale gray shadow, hardly distinguishable from the floating vapor, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches of ruddy color along the angular crags, and pierced in long, level rays, through their fringes of spear-like pine. Far above, shot up splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow.

If we ask how this loftiness is attained, the reply must be, first, that the subject is lofty and deserving of lofty description. Indeed, the description never has a right to be loftier than the subject. Then, examining this passage in detail, we find that the words are all dignified, and in their very sound they are lofty, as for instance "massy," "myriads," "castellated," "angular crags." The very sound of the words seems to correspond to the idea. Notice the repetition of the letter l in "Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley." This repetition of a letter is called *alliteration*, and here it serves to

suggest in and of itself the idea of the level. The same effect is produced again in "streak of sunlit snow" with the repetition of s. The entire passage is filled with alliteration, but it is used so naturally that you would never think of it unless your attention were called to it.

Next, we note that the structure rises gradually but steadily upward. We never jump to loftiness, and always find it necessary to climb there. "Jumping to loftiness" is like trying to lift oneself by one's boot-straps: it is very ridiculous to all who behold it. Ruskin begins with a very ordinary sentence. He says it was a fine morning, just as any one might say it. But the next sentence starts suddenly upward from the dead level, and to the end of the paragraph we rise, terrace on terrace, by splendid sweeps and jagged cliffs, till at the end we reach "the eternal snow."

Exercise.

The study of the following selections from Macaulay and De Quincey may be conducted on a plan a trifle different from that heretofore employed. The present writer spent two hours each day for two weeks reading this passage from Macaulay over and over: then he wrote a short essay on "Macaulay as a Model of Style," trying to describe Macaulay's style as forcibly and skillfully as Macaulay describes the Puritans. The resulting paper did not appear to be an imitation of Macaulay, but it had many of the strong features of Macaulay's style which had not appeared in prev-

ious work. The same method was followed in the study of De Quincey's "English Mail Coach," with even better results. The great difficulty arose from the fact that these lofty styles were learned only too well and were not counterbalanced by the study of other and more universally useful styles. It is dangerous to become fascinated with the lofty style, highly useful as it is on occasion.

If the student does not feel that he is able to succeed by the method of study just described, let him confine himself to more direct imitation, following out Franklin's plan.

THE PURITANS.

(From the essay on Milton.)

By T. B. Macaulay.

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and

dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their destestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

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Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe has ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dress of the friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of

superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging in general terms an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless intervals which separated the whole race from him on whom their eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but his favor; and, confident of that favor, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The

very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which shortsighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the suffering of her expiring God.

Thus the Puritans were made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion, the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous works of the soul had left no per-

ceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors, and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by an barrier.

Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst

vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and their crusades, their Dunstons and their De Montforts, their Dominics and their Escobars. Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.

Notes.

The most casual examination of Macaulay's style shows us that the words, the sentences, and the paragraphs are all arranged in rows, one on this side, one on that, a column here, another just like it over there, a whole row of columns above this window, and a whole row of columns above that window, just as bricks are built up in geometrical design. Almost every word contains an antithesis. The whole constitutes what is called the *balanced structure*.

We see also that Macaulay frequently repeats the same word again and again, and the repetition gives strength. Indeed, repetition is necessary to make this balanced structure: there must always be so much likeness and so much unlikeness—and the likeness and unlikeness must just balance.

We have shown the utility of variation: Macaulay shows the force there is in monotony, in repetition. In one sentence after another through an entire paragraph he repeats the same thing over and over and over. There is no rising by step after step to something higher in Macaulay: everything is on the dead level; but it is a powerful, heroic level.

The first words repeated and contrasted are *press* and *stage*. The sentence containing these words is balanced nicely. In the following sentence we have four short sentences united into one, and the first clause contrasts with the second and the third with the fourth. The sentence beginning "The ostentatious simplicity of their dress" gives us a whole series of subjects, all resting on a single short predicate—"were fair game for the laughers." The next sentence catches up the word "laughers" and plays upon it.

In the second paragraph we have as subject "those" followed by a whole series of relative clauses beginning with "who," and this series again rests on a very short predicate—"were no vulgar fanatics."

And so on through the entire description, we find series after series, contrast after contrast; now it is a dozen words all in the same construction, now a number of sentences all beginning in the same way and ending in the same way.

The first paragraph takes up the subject of the contrast of those who laughed and those who were laughed at. The second paragraph enlarges upon good points in the objects of the examination. The third paragraph describes their minds, and we perceive that Macaulay has all along been leading into this by his series of contrasts. In the fourth paragraph he brings the two sides into the closest possible relations, so that the contrast reaches its height. The last short paragraph sums up the facts.

This style, though highly artificial, is highly useful when used in moderation. It is unfortunate that Macaulay uses it so constantly. When he cannot find contrasts he sometimes makes them, and to make them he distorts the truth. Besides, he wearies us by keeping us too monotonously on a high dead level. In time we come to feel that he is making contrasts merely because he has a passion for making them, not because they serve any purpose. But for one who wishes to learn this style, no better model can be found in the English language.

DREAM-FUGUE

On the Theme of Sudden Death.*

By Thomas De Quincey.

“Whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved
Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.”

Paradise Lost, Book XI.

Tumultuosissimamente.

Passion of sudden death! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs!—rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst tombs in churches I have seen) of woman

*“The English Mail-Coach” consists of three sections, “The Glory of Motion,” “Vision of Sudden Death,” and “Dream-Fugue.” De Quincey describes riding on the top of a heavy mail-coach. In the dead of night they pass a young couple in a light gig, and the heavy mail-coach just escapes shattering the light gig and perhaps killing the young occupants. De Quincey develops his sensations in witnessing this “vision of sudden death,” and rises step by step to the majestic beauty and poetic passion of the dream-fugue.

bursting her selpuchral bonds—of woman's Ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped, adoring hands—waiting, watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet's call to rise from dust forever! Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of mighty abysses!—vision that didst start back, that didst reel away, like a shivering scroll before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind! Epilepsy so brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaic of dreams? Fragments of music too passionate, heard once and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years, have lost no element of horror?

I.

Lo, it is summer—almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating—she upon a fairy pinnace, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festive happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnace moved! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers—young women how lovely, young men how noble,

that were dancing together, and slowly drifting toward *us* amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling, and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnace nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter,—all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnace, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold! the pinnace was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. "But where," and I turned to our crew—"where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them*?" Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the mast-head, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, "Sail on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us; in seventy seconds she also will founder."

II.

I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaking with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a crossbow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. "Are they mad?" some voice exclaimed from our deck. "Do they woo their ruin?"

But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps in malice opened ahead to receive her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne upon the desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her, she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows: still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling—rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying—there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden forever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how.

Notes.

De Quincey's "Dream-Fugue" is as luxuriant and extravagant a use of metaphor as Macaulay's "Puritans" is of the use of antithesis and the balanced structure. The whole thing is a metaphor, and every part is a metaphor within a metaphor.

This is much more than mere fine writing. It is a metaphorical representation of the incident he has previously described. In that incident he was particular struck by the actions of the lady.

The young man turned his horse out of the path of the coach, but some part of the coach struck one of the wheels of the gig, and as it did so, the lady involuntarily started up, throwing up her arms, and at once sank back as in a faint. De Quincey did not see her face, and hence he speaks in this description of "averted signs." The "woman bursting her sepulchral bonds" probably refers to a tomb in Westminster Abbey which represents a woman escaping from the door of the tomb, and Death, a skeleton, is just behind her, but too late to catch her "arching foot" as she flies upward—presumably as a spirit.

So every image corresponds to a reality, either in the facts or in De Quincey's emotion at the sight of them. The novice fails in such writing as this because he becomes enamored of his beautiful images and forgets what he is trying to illustrate. The relation between reality and image should be as invariable as mathematics. If such startling images cannot be used with perfect clearness and vivid perception of their usefulness and value, they should not be used at all. De Quincey is so successful because his mind comprehends every detail of the scene, and through the images we see the bottom truth as through a perfect crystal. A clouded diamond is no more ruined by its cloudiness than a clouded metaphor.

As in Ruskin's description of the mountain, we see in this the value of the sounds of words, and how they seem to make music in themselves. A word lacking in dignity in the very least would

have ruined the whole picture, and so would a word whose rotund sound did not correspond to the loftiness of the passage. Perhaps the only word that jars is "English three-decker"—but the language apparently afforded De Quincey no substitute which would make his meaning clear.

CHAPTER VII.

RESERVE:

Thackeray.

It has been hinted that the rhetorical, impassioned, and lofty styles are in a measure dangerous. The natural corrective of that danger is artistic *reserve*.

Reserve is a negative quality, and so it has not been emphasized by writers on composition as it ought to be. But if it is negative, it is none the less real and important, and fortunately we have in Thackeray a masterly example of its positive power.

Originally reserve is to be traced to a natural reticence and modesty in the character of the author who employs it. It may be studied, however, and cultivated as a characteristic of style. As an artistic quality it consists in saying exactly what the facts demand, no more, no less—and to say no more especially on those occasions when most people employ superlatives. Macaulay was not characterized by reserve. He speaks of the Puritans as "the most remarkable body of men the world ever produced." "Most" is a com-

mon word in his vocabulary, since it served so well to round out the phrase and the idea. Thackeray, on the other hand, is almost too modest. He is so afraid of saying too much that sometimes he does not say enough, and that may possibly account for the fact that he was never as popular as the overflowing Dickens. The lack of reserve made Dickens "slop over" occasionally, as indelicate critics have put it; and the presence of reserve did more than any other one thing to give Thackeray the reputation for perfect style which all concede to him.

One of the most famous passages in all of Thackeray's works is the description of the battle of Waterloo in "Vanity Fair," ch. XXXII:

All that day, from morning till past sunset, the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All of us have read of what occurred during that interval. The tale is in every Englishman's mouth; and you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost, are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that famous action. Its remembrance rankles still in the bosoms of millions of the countrymen of those brave men who lost the day. They pant for an opportunity of revenging that humiliation; and if a contest, ending in a victory on their part, should ensue, elating them in their turn, and leaving its cursed legacy of hatred and rage behind to us, there is no end to the so called glory and shame, and to the alternation of successful and unsuccessful murder, in which two high-spirited nations might engage. Centuries hence, we French-

men and Englishmen might be boasting and killing each other still, carrying out bravely the Devil's code of honor.

All our friends took their share, and fought like men in the great field. All day long, while the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless English infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard in Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Towards evening, the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last; the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day and spite of all; unscared by the thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line,—the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to wave and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then, at last, the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels,—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart."

Who before ever began the description of a great victory by praising the enemy! And yet when we consider it, there is no more artistically pow-

erful method than this, of showing how very great the enemy was, and then saying simply, "The English defeated them."

But Thackeray wished to do more than this. He was preparing the reader for the awful presence of death in a private affliction, Amelia's loss of her husband George. To do this he lets his heart go out in sympathy for the French, and by that sympathy he seems to rise above all race, to a supreme height where exist the griefs of the human heart and God alone.

With all this careful preparation, the short, simple closing paragraph—the barest possible statement of the facts—produces an effect unsurpassed in literature. The whole situation seems to cry out for superlatives; yet Thackeray uses none, but remains dignified, calm, and therefore grand.

The following selection serves as a sort of preface to the novel "Vanity Fair." It is quite as remarkable for the things it leaves unsaid as for the things it says. Of course its object is to whet the reader's appetite for the story that is to follow; but throughout the author seems to be laughing at himself. In the last paragraph we see one of the few superlatives to be found in Thackeray—he says the show has been "most favorably noticed" by the "conductors of the Public Press, and by the Nobility and Gentry." Those capital letters prove the humorous intent of the superlative, which seems to be a burlesque on other authors who praise themselves. One of the

criticisms had been that Amelia was no better than a doll; and Thackeray takes the critics at their word and refers to the "Amelia Doll," merely hinting gently that even a doll may find friends.

BEFORE THE CURTAIN.

(Preface to "Vanity Fair.")

By W. M. Thackeray.

As the Manager of the Performance sits before the curtain on the boards, and looks into the Fair, a feeling of profound melancholy comes over him in his survey of the bustling place. There is a great quantity of eating and drinking, making love and jilting, laughing and the contrary, smoking, cheating, fighting, dancing, and fiddling: there are bullies pushing about, bucks ogling the women, knaves picking pockets, policemen on the lookout, quacks (other quacks, plague take them!) bawling in front of their booths, and yokels looking up at the tinselled dancers and poor old rouged tumblers, while the light-fingered folk are operating upon their pockets behind. Yes, this is Vanity Fair; not a moral place certainly; nor a merry one, though very noisy. Look at the faces of the actors and buffoons when they come off from their business; and Tom Fool washing the paint off his cheeks before he sits down to dinner with his wife and the little Jack Puddings behind the canvas. The curtain will be up presently, and he will be turning over head and heels, and crying, "How are you?"

A man with a reflective turn of mind, walking through an exhibition of this sort, will not be oppressed, I take it, by his own or other people's hilarity. An episode of humor or kindness touches and amuses

him here and there,—a pretty child looking at a gingerbread stall; a pretty girl blushing whilst her lover talks to her and chooses her fairing; poor Tom Fool, yonder behind the wagon mumbling his bone with the honest family which lives by his tumbling; but the general impression is one more melancholy than mirthful. When you come home, you sit down, in a sober, contemplative, not uncharitable frame of mind, and apply yourself to your books or your business.

I have no other moral than this to tag to the present story of "Vanity Fair." Some people consider Fairs immoral altogether, and eschew such, with their servants and families; very likely they are right. But persons who think otherwise, and are of a lazy, or a benevolent, or a sarcastic mood, may perhaps like to step in for half an hour, and look at the performances. There are scenes of all sorts; some dreadful combats, some grand and lofty horse-riding, some scenes of high life, and some of very middling indeed; some love-making for the sentimental, and some light comic business; the whole accompanied by appropriate scenery, and brilliantly illuminated with the Author's own candles.

What more has the Manager of the Performance to say?—To acknowledge the kindness with which it has been received in all the principal towns of England through which the Show has passed, and where it has been most favorably noticed by the respected conductors of the Public Press, and by the Nobility and Gentry. He is proud to think that his Puppets have given satisfaction to the very best company in this empire. The famous little Becky Puppet has been pronounced to be uncommonly flexible in the joints, and lively on the wire: the Amelia Doll, though it has had a smaller circle of admirers, has yet been

carved and dressed with the greatest care by the artist: the Dobbin Figure, though apparently clumsy, yet dances in a very amusing and natural manner: the Little Boy's Dance has been liked by some; and please to remark the richly dressed figure of the Wicked Nobleman, on which no expense has been spared, and which Old Nick will fetch away at the end of this singular performance.

And with this, and a profound bow to his patrons, the Manager retires, and the curtain rises.

London, June 28, 1848.

CHAPTER VIII.

CRITICISM:

Matthew Arnold and Ruskin.

The term "criticism" may appropriately be used to designate all writing in which logic predominates over emotion. The style of criticism is the style of argument, exposition, and debate, as well as of literary analysis; and it is the appropriate style to be used in mathematical discussions and all scientific essays.

Of course the strictly critical style may be united with almost any other. We are presenting pure types; but very seldom does it happen that any composition ordinarily produced belongs to any one pure type. Criticism would be dull without the enlivening effects of some appeal to the emotions. We shall illustrate this point in a quotation from Ruskin.

The critical style has just one secret: it de-

depends on a very close definition of words. In ordinary use, words do not have a sufficiently definite meaning for scientific purposes. Therefore in scientific writing it is necessary to define them exactly, and so change common words into technical terms. To these may be added the great body of words used in no other way than as technical terms.

Of course our first preparation for criticism is to master the technical terms and technical uses of words peculiar to the subject we are treating. Then we must make it clear to the reader that we are using words in their technical senses so that he will know how to interpret them.

But beyond that we must make technical terms as we go along, by defining common words very strictly. This is nicely illustrated by Matthew Arnold, one of the most accomplished of pure critics. The opening paragraphs of the first chapter of "Culture and Anarchy"—the chapter entitled "Sweetness and Light"—will serve for illustration, and the student is referred to the complete work for material for further study and imitation.

From "Sweetness and Light."

The disparagers of culture, [says Mr. Arnold], make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance,

or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very different estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and

the very desire to see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says: 'The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent.' This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

Starting with exact definitions of words, it is easy to pass to exact definitions of ideas, which is the thing we should be aiming at all the time. The logical accuracy of our language, however, is apparent throughout.

Matthew Arnold does not embellish his criticism, nor does he make any special appeal to the feelings or emotions of his readers. Not so Ruskin. He discovers intellectual emotions, and makes pleasant appeals to those emotions. Consequently his criticism has been more popular than Matthew Arnold's. As an example of this freer, more varied critical style, let us cite the opening paragraphs of the lecture "Of Queens' Gardens" in "Sesame and Lilies":

From "Sesame and Lilies."

It will be well...that I should shortly state to you my general intention...The questions specially proposed to you in my former lecture, namely How and

What to Read, rose out of a far deeper one, which it was my endeavor to make you propose earnestly to yourselves, namely, Why to Read. I want you to feel, with me, that whatever advantage we possess in the present day in the diffusion of education and of literature, can only be rightly used by any of us when we have apprehended clearly what education is to lead to, and literature to teach. I wish you to see that both well directed moral training and well chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is, according to the measure of it, in the truest sense kingly*; conferring indeed the purest kingship that can exist among men. Too many other kingships (however distinguished by visible insignia or material power) being either spectral, or tyrannous; spectral—that is to say, aspects and shadows only of royalty, hollow as death, and which only the “likeness of a kingly crown have on;” or else tyrannous—that is to say, substituting their own will for the law of justice and love by which all true kings rule.

There is then, I repeat (and as I want to leave this idea with you, I begin with it, and shall end with it) only one pure kind of kingship,—an inevitable or eternal kind, crowned or not,—the kingship, namely, which consists in a stronger moral state and truer thoughtful state than that of others, enabling you, therefore, to guide or to raise them. Observe that word “state;” we have got into a loose way of using it. It means literally the standing and stability of a thing; and you have the full force of it in the derived word “statue”—“the immovable thing.” A king’s majesty or “state,” then, and the right of his king-

*The preceding lecture was entitled “Of Kings’s Treasures.”

dom to be called a State, depends on the movelessness of both,—without tremor, without quiver of balance, established and enthroned upon a foundation of eternal law which nothing can alter or overthrow.

Believing that all literature and all education are only useful so far as they tend to confirm this calm, beneficent, and therefore kingly, power,—first over ourselves, and, through ourselves, over all around us,—I am now going to ask you to consider with me further, what special portion or kind of this royal authority, arising out of noble education, may rightly be possessed by women; and how far they also are called to a true queenly power,—not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. And in what sense, if they rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking of the territories over which each of them reigned as ‘Queens’ Gardens.’

Here still is the true critical style, with exact definitions; but the whole argument is a metaphor, and the object of the criticism is to rouse feelings that will lead to action.

It will be observed that words which by definition are to be taken in some sort of technical sense are distinguished to the eye in some way. Matthew Arnold used italics. Ruskin first places “state” within quotation marks, and then, when he uses the word in a still different sense, he writes it with a capital letter—State. Capitalization is perhaps the most common way for designating common words when used in a special sense which is defined by the writer—or defined

by implication. This is the explanation of the capital letters with which the writings of Carlyle are filled. He constantly endeavors to make words mean more than, or something different from, the meaning they usually have.

The peculiar embellishments of the critical writer are epigram, paradox, and satire. An *epigram* is a very short phrase or sentence which is so full of implied meaning or suggestion that it catches the attention at once, and remains in the memory easily. The *paradox* is something of the same sort on a larger scale. It is a statement that we can hardly believe to be true, since it seems at first sight to be self-contradictory, or to contradict well known truths or laws; but on examination we find that in a peculiar sense it is strictly true. *Satire* is a variation of humor peculiarly adapted to criticism, since it is intended to make the common idea ridiculous when compared with the ideas which the critic is trying to bring out: it is a sort of argument by force of stinging points. We may find an example of satire in its perfection in Swift, especially in his "Gulliver's Travels"—since these are satires the point of which we can appreciate today. Oscar Wilde was peculiarly given to epigram, and in his plays especially we may find epigram carried to the same excess that the balanced structure is carried by Macaulay. More moderate epigram may be found in Emerson and Carlyle. Paradox is something that we should use only on special occasion.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STYLE OF FICTION:

Narrative, Description, and Dialogue.

Dickens.

In fiction there are three different kinds of writing which must be blended with a fine skill, and this fact makes fiction so much the more difficult than any other sort of writing. History is largely narrative, pure and simple, newspaper articles are description, dramas are dialogue, but fiction must unite in a way peculiar to itself the niceties of all three.

We must take each style separately and master it thoroughly before trying to combine the three in a work of fiction. The simplest is narrative, and consists chiefly in the ability to tell a plain story straight on to the end, just as in conversation Neighbor Gossip comes and tells a long story to her friend the Listener. A writer will gain this skill if he practise on writing out tales or stories just as nearly as possible as a child would do it, supposing the child had a sufficient vocabulary. Letter-writing, when one is away from home and wishes to tell his intimate friends all that has happened to him, is practice of just this sort, and the best practice.

Newspaper articles are more descriptive than any other sort of writing. You have a description of a new invention, of a great fire, of a prisoner at the bar of justice. It is not quite so

spontaneous as narrative. Children seldom describe, and the newspaper man finds difficulty in making what seems a very brief tale into a column article until he can weave description as readily as he breathes.

Dialogue in a story is by no means the same as the dialogue of a play: it ought rather to be a description of a conversation, and very seldom is it a full report of what is said on each side.

Description is used in its technical sense to designate the presentation of a scene without reference to events; narrative is a description of events as they have happened, a dialogue is a description of conversation. Fiction is essentially a descriptive art, and quite as much is it descriptive in dialogue as in any other part.

The best way to master dialogue as an element by itself is to study the novels of writers like Dickens, Thackeray, or George Eliot. Dialogue has its full development only in the novel, and it is here and not in short stories that the student of fiction should study it. The important points to be noticed are that only characteristic and significant speeches are reproduced. When the conversation gives only facts that should be known to the reader it is thrown into the indirect or narrative form, and frequently when the impression that a conversation makes is all that is important, this impression is described in general terms instead of in a detailed report of the conversation itself.

So much for the three different modes of writ-

ing individually considered. The important and difficult point comes in the balanced combination of the three, not in the various parts of the story, but in each single paragraph. Henry James in his paper on "The Art of Fiction," says very truly that every descriptive passage is at the same time narrative, and every dialogue is in its essence also descriptive. The truth is, the writer of stories has a style of his own, which we may call the narrative-descriptive-dialogue style, which is a union in one and the same sentence of all three sorts of writing. In each sentence, to be sure, narrative or description or dialogue will predominate; but still the narrative is always present in the description, and the description in the dialogue, as Mr. James says; and if you take a paragraph this fact will appear more clearly, and if you take three or four paragraphs, or a whole story, the fusion of all three styles in the same words is clearly apparent.

It is impossible to give fixed rules for the varying proportion of description, narration, or dialogue in any given passage. The writer must guide himself entirely by the impression in his own mind. He sees with his mind's eye a scene and events happening in it. As he describes this from point to point he constantly asks himself, What method of using words will be most effective here? He keeps the impression always closely in mind. He does not wander from it to put in a descriptive passage or a clever bit of dialogue or a pleasing narrative: he follows out

his description of the impression with faithful accuracy, thinking only of being true to his own conception, and constantly ransacking his whole knowledge of language to get the best expression, whatever it may be. Now it may be a little descriptive touch, now a sentence or two out of a conversation, now plain narration of events. Dialogue is the most expansive and tiring, and should frequently be relieved by the condensed narrative, which is simple and easy reading. Description should seldom be given in chunks, but rather in touches of a brief and delicate kind, and with the aim of being suggestive rather than full and detailed.

Humor, and especially good humor, are indispensable to the most successful works of fiction. Above all other kinds of writing, fiction must win the heart of the reader. And this requires that the heart of the writer should be tender and sympathetic. Harsh critics call this quality sentiment, and even sentimentality. Dickens had it above all other writers, and it is probable that this popularity has never been surpassed. Scott succeeded by his splendid descriptions, but no one can deny that he was also one of the biggest-hearted men in the world. And Thackeray, with all his reserve, had a heart as tender and sympathetic as was ever borne by so polished a gentleman.

As an almost perfect example of the blending of narrative, description, and dialogue, all welded into an effective whole by the most delicate and

winning sentiment, we offer the following selection from "Barbox Bros. & Co.," in "Mugby Junction."

POLLY.

By Charles Dickens.

Although he had arrived at his journey's end for the day at noon, he had since insensibly walked about the town so far and so long that the lamplighters were now at their work in the streets, and the shops were sparkling up brilliantly. Thus reminded to turn towards his quarters, he was in the act of doing so, when a very little hand crept into his, and a very little voice said :

"O! If you please, I am lost!"

He looked down, and saw a very little fair-haired girl.

"Yes," she said, confirming her words with a serious nod. "I am, indeed. I am lost."

Greatly perplexed, he stopped, looked about him for help, descried none, and said, bending low: "Where do you live, my child?"

"I don't know where I live," she returned. "I am lost."

"What is your name?"

"Polly."

"What is your other name?"

The reply was prompt, but unintelligible.

Imitating the sound, as he caught it, he hazarded the guess, "Trivits?"

"O no!" said the child, shaking her head. "Nothing like that."

"Say it again, little one."

An unpromising business. For this time it had quite a different sound.

He made the venture: "Paddens?"

"O no!" said the child. "Nothing like that."

"Once more. Let us try it again, dear."

A most hopeless business. This time it swelled into four syllables. "It can't be Tappitarver?" said said Barbox Brothers, rubbing his head with his hat in discomfiture.

"No! It ain't," the child quietly assented.

On her trying this unfortunate name once more, with extraordinary efforts at distinction, it swelled into eight syllables at least.

"Ah! I think," said Barbox Brothers, with a desperate air of resignation, "that we had better give it up."

"But I am lost," said the child nestling her little hand more closely in his, "and you'll take care of me, won't you?"

If ever a man were disconcerted by division between compassion on the one hand, and the very imbecility of irresolution on the other, here the man was. "Lost!" he repeated, looking down at the child. "I am sure I am. What is to be done!"

"Where do *you* live?" asked the child, looking up at him wistfully.

"Over there," he answered, pointing vaguely in the direction of the hotel.

"Hadn't we better go there?" said the child.

"Really," he replied, "I don't know but what we had."

So they set off, hand in hand;—he, through comparison of himself against his little companion, with a clumsy feeling on him as if he had just developed into a foolish giant;—she, clearly elevated in her own tiny opinion by having got him so neatly out of his embarrassment.

"We are going to have dinner when we get there, I suppose?" said Polly.

"Well," he rejoined, "I — yes, I suppose we are."

"Do you like your dinner?" asked the child.

"Why, on the whole," said Barbox Brothers, "yes, I think I do."

"I do mine," said Polly. "Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"No, have you?"

"Mine are dead."

"O!" said Barbox Brothers. With that absurd sense of unwieldiness of mind and body weighing him down, he would not have known how to pursue the conversation beyond this curt rejoinder, but that the child was always ready for him.

"What," she asked, turning her soft hand coaxingly in his, "are you going to do to amuse me, after dinner?"

"Upon my soul, Polly," exclaimed Barbox Brothers, very much at a loss, "I have not the slightest idea!"

"Then I tell you what," said Polly. "Have you got any cards at the house?"

"Plenty," said Barbox Brothers, in a boastful vein.

"Very well. Then I'll build houses, and you shall look at me. You mustn't blow, you know."

"O no!" said Barbox Brothers. "No, no, no! No blowing! Blowing's not fair."

He flattered himself that he had said this pretty well for an idiotic monster; but the child, instantly perceiving the awkwardness of his attempt to adapt himself to her level, utterly destroyed his hopeful opinion of himself by saying, compassionately: "What a funny man you are!"

Feeling, after this melancholy failure, as if he

every minute grew bigger and heavier in person, and weaker in mind, Barbox gave himself up for a bad job. No giant ever submitted more meekly to be led in triumph by all-conquering Jack, than he to be bound in slavery to Polly.

"Do you know any stories?" she asked him.

He was reduced to the humiliating confession: "No."

"What a dunce you must be, mustn't you?" said Polly.

He was reduced to the humiliating confession: "Yes."

"Would you like me to teach you a story? But you must remember it, you know, and be able to tell it right to somebody else afterwards?"

He professed that it would afford him the highest mental gratification to be taught a story, and that he would humbly endeavor to retain it in his mind. Whereupon Polly, giving her hand a new little turn in his, expressive of settling down for enjoyment, commenced a long romance, of which every relishing clause began with the words: "So this," or "And so this." As, "So this boy;" or, "So this fairy;" or "And so this pie was four yards round, and two yards and a quarter deep." The interest of the romance was derived from the intervention of this fairy to punish this boy for having a greedy appetite. To achieve which purpose, this fairy made this pie, and this boy ate and ate and ate, and his cheeks swelled and swelled and swelled. There were many tributary circumstances, but the forcible interest culminated in the total consumption of this pie, and the bursting of this boy. Truly he was a fine sight, Barbox Brothers, with serious attentive face, an ear bent down, much jostled on the pavements of the busy town, but afraid

of losing a single incident of the epic, lest he should be examined in it by-and-by and found deficient.

Exercise. Rewrite this little story, locating the scene in your own town and describing yourself in the place of Barbox Bros. Make as few changes in the wording as possible.

CHAPTER X.

THE EPIGRAMMATIC STYLE:

Stephen Crane.

A peculiarly modern style is that in which very short sentences are used for pungent effect. If to this characteristic of short sentences we add a slightly unusual though perfectly obvious use of common words, we have what has been called the "epigrammatic style," though it does not necessarily have any epigrams in it. It is the modern newspaper and advertisement writer's method of emphasis; and if it could be used in moderation, or on occasion, it would be extremely effective. But to use it at all times and for all subjects is a vice distinctly to be avoided.

Stephen Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage" is written almost wholly in this style. If we read three or four chapters of this story we may see how tiring it is for the mind to be constantly jerked along. At the same time, in a brief advertising booklet probably no other style that is sufficiently simple and direct would be as likely to attract immediate attention and hold it for

the short time usually required to read an advertisement.

Crane's style has a literary turn and quality which will not be found in the epigrammatic advertisement, chiefly because Crane is descriptive, while the advertiser is merely argumentative. However, the advertisement writer will learn the epigrammatic style most surely and quickly by studying the literary form of it.

From "The Red Badge of Courage."

The blue haze of evening was upon the field. The lines of forest were long purple shadows. One cloud lay along the western sky partly smothering the red.

As the youth left the scene behind him, he heard the guns suddenly roar out. He imagined them shaking in black rage. They belched and howled like brass devils guarding a gate. The soft air was filled with the tremendous remonstrance. With it came the shattering peal of opposing infantry. Turning to look behind him, he could see sheets of orange light illumine the shadowy distance. There were subtle and sudden lightnings in the far air. At times he thought he could see heaving masses of men.

He hurried on in the dusk. The day had faded until he could barely distinguish place for his feet. The purple darkness was filled with men who lectured and jabbered. Sometimes he could see them gesticulating against the blue and somber sky. There seemed to be a great ruck of men and munitions spread about in the forest and in the fields. . . .

His thoughts as he walked fixed intently upon his hurt. There was a cool, liquid feeling about it and he imagined blood moving slowly down under his hair.

His head seemed swollen to a size that made him think his neck to be inadequate.

The new silence of his wound made much worryment. The little blistering voices of pain that had called out from his scalp were, he thought, definite in their expression of danger. By them he believed that he could measure his plight. But when they remained ominously silent he became frightened and imagined terrible fingers that clutched into his brain.

Amid it he began to reflect upon various incidents and conditions of the past. He bethought him of certain meals his mother had cooked at home, in which those dishes of which he was particularly fond had occupied prominent positions. He saw the spread table. The pine walls of the kitchen were glowing in the warm light from the stove. Too, he remembered how he and his companions used to go from the school-house to the bank of a shaded pool. He saw his clothes in disorderly array upon the grass of the bank. He felt the swash of the fragrant water upon his body. The leaves of the overhanging maple rustled with melody in the wind of youthful summer.

Exercise.

After reading this passage over a dozen times very slowly and carefully, and copying it phrase by phrase, continue the narrative in Crane's style through two more paragraphs, bringing the story of this day's doing to some natural conclusion.

CHAPTER XI.

THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY:**The Bible, Franklin, Lincoln.**

We have all heard that the simplest style is the strongest; and no doubt most of us have wondered how this could be, as we turned over in our minds examples of what seemed to us simplicity, comparing them with the rhetorical, the lofty, and the sublime passages we could call to mind.

Precisely this wonder was in the minds of a number of very well educated people who gathered to attend the dedicatory exercises of the Gettysburg monument, and Abraham Lincoln gave them one of the very finest illustrations in the whole range of the world's history, of how simplicity can be stronger than rhetoric. Edward Everett was the orator of the day, and he delivered a most polished and brilliant oration. When he sat down the friends of Lincoln regretted that this homely countryman was to be asked to "say a few words," since they felt that whatever he might say would be a decided anticlimax. The few words that he did utter are the immortal "Gettysburg speech," by far the shortest great oration on record. Edward Everett afterward remarked, "I wish I could have produced in two hours the effect that Lincoln produced in two minutes." The tremendous effect of that speech could have been produced in no

other way than by the power of simplicity, which permits the compression of more thought into a few words than any other style-form. All rhetoric is more or less windy. The quality of a simple style is that in order to be anything at all it must be solid metal all the way through.

The Bible, the greatest literary production in the world as atheists and Christians alike admit, is our supreme example of the wonderful power of simplicity, and it more than any other one book has served to mould the style of great writers. To take a purely literary passage, what could be more affecting, yet more simple, than these words from Ecclesiastes?

From "Ecclesiastes."

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshoppers shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver

cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

This is the sort of barbaric poetry that man in his natural and original state might be supposed to utter. It lacks the nice logic and fine polish of Greek culture; indeed its grammar is somewhat confused. But there is a higher logic than the logic of grammar, namely the logic of life and suffering. The man who wrote this passage had put a year of his existence into every phrase; and that is why it happens that we can find here more phrases quoted by everybody than we can even in the best passage of similar length in Shakspeare or any other modern writer.

We see in proverbs how by the power of simplicity an enormous amount of thought can be packed into a single line. Some of these have taken thousands of years to grow; and because so much time is required in the making of them, our facile modern writers never produce any. Their fleeting epigrams appear to be spurious coin the moment they are placed side by side with Franklin's epigrams, for instance. Franklin worked his proverbs into the vacant spaces in his almanac during a period of twenty-five years, and then collected all those proverbs into a short paper entitled, "The Way to Wealth." It may be added, also, that he did not even originate most of these sayings, but only gave a new stamp to

what he found in Hindu and Arabic records. For all that, Poor Richard's Almanac is more likely to become immortal than even Franklin's own name and fame.

The history of Bacon's essays is another fine example of what simplicity can effect in the way of greatness. These essays were originally nothing more than single sentences jotted down in a notebook, probably as an aid to conversation. How many times they were worked over we have no means of knowing; but we have three printed editions of the essays, each of which is immensely developed from what went before.

In reading the following lines from Franklin, let us reflect that not less than a year went to the writing of every phrase that can be called great; and that if we could spend a year in writing a single sentence, it might be as well worth preserving as these proverbs. Some men have been made famous by one sentence, usually because it somehow expressed the substance of a lifetime.

From "Poor Richard's Almanac."

Father Abraham stood up and replied, "If you would have my advice, I will give it you in short; for *a word to the wise is enough*, and *many words won't fill a bushel*, as POOR RICHARD says."

They all joined him and desired him to speak his mind; and gathering them around him, he proceeded as follows:

Friends, says he, and neighbors! The taxes are indeed very heavy; and if those laid on by the Gov-

ernment were the only ones we had to pay, we might the more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our Idleness, three times as much by our Pride, and four times as much by our Folly; and from these taxes the Commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us. *God helps them that helps themselves*, as POOR RICHARD says in his *Almanac* of 1733.

It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service. But Idleness taxes many of us much more; if we reckon all that is spent in absolute sloth, or doing of nothing; with that which is spent in idle employments or amusements that amount to nothing. Sloth, by bringing on disease, absolutely shortens life. *Sloth, like Rust, consumes faster than Labor wears*; while the used key is always bright, as POOR RICHARD says. *But dost thou love Life? Then do not squander time! for that's the stuff Life is made of*, as POOR RICHARD says.

How much more time than is necessary do we spend in sleep? forgetting that *the sleeping fox catches no poultry*; and that *there will be sleeping enough in the grave*, as POOR RICHARD says.

If Time be of all things the most precious, *wasting of Time must be* (as POOR RICHARD says) *the greatest prodigality*; and since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost time is never found again*; and *what we call Time enough! always proves little enough*, let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose: so, by diligence, shall we do more with less perplexity. *Sloth makes all things difficult, but Industry all things easy*, as POOR RICHARD says: and *He that*

riseth late, must trot all day; and shall scarce overtake his business at night. While Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him, as we read in POOR RICHARD; who adds, Drive thy business! Let not that drive thee! and

*Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

As Franklin extracted these sayings one by one out of the Arabic and other sources, in each case giving the phrases a new turn, and as Bacon jotted down in his notebook every witty word he heard, so we will make reputations for ourselves if we are always picking up the good things of others and using them whenever we can.

THE GETTYSBURG SPEECH.

By Abraham Lincoln.

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living,

rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion,—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain,—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom,—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

HARMONY OF STYLE:

Irving and Hawthorne.

A work of literary art is like a piece of music: one false note makes a discord that spoils the effect of the whole. But it is useless to give rules for writing an harmonious style. When one sits down to write he should give his whole thought and energy to expressing himself forcibly and with the vital glow of an overpowering interest. An interesting thought expressed with force and suggestiveness is worth volumes of commonplaces couched in the most faultless language. The writer should never hesitate in choosing between perfectness of language and vigor. On the first writing verbal perfection should be sacrificed without a moment's hesitation. But when a story or essay has once been written, the writer will turn his attention to

those small details of style. He must harmonize his language. He must polish. It is one of the most tedious processes in literature, and to the novice the most difficult on which to make a beginning. Yet there is nothing more surely a matter of labor and not of genius. It is for this that one masters grammar and rhetoric, and studies the individual uses of words. Carried to an extreme it is fatal to vitality of style. But human nature is more often prone to shirk, and this is the thing that is passed over from laziness. If you find one who declaims against the utmost care in verbal polish, you will find a lazy man.

The beginner, however, rarely knows how to set to work, and this chapter is intended to give some practical hints. We assume that the student knows perfectly well what good grammar is, as well as the leading principles of rhetoric, and could easily correct his faults in these if he should see them. There are several distinct classes of errors to look for: faults of grammar, such as the mixing of modes and tenses, and the agreement of verbs and particles in number when collective nouns are referred to; faults of rhetoric, such as the mixing of figures of speech; faults of taste, such as the use of words with a disagreeable or misleading atmosphere about them, though their strict meaning makes their use correct enough; faults of repetition of the same word in differing senses in the same sentence or paragraph; faults of tediousness of

phrasing or explanation; faults of lack of clearness in expressing the exact meaning; faults of sentimental use of language, that is, falling into fine phrases which have no distinct meaning—the most discordant fault of all; faults of digression in the structure of the composition.

This list is comprehensive of the chief points to look for in verbal revision. Faults of grammar need no explanation here. But we would say, Beware. The most skilled writers are almost constantly falling into errors of this kind, for they are the most subtle and elusive of all verbal failings. There is, indeed, but one certain way to be sure that they are all removed, and that is by parsing every word by grammatical formulæ. It is a somewhat tedious method, but by practice one may weigh each word with rapidity, and it is only by considering each word alone that one may be sure that nothing is passed over. In the same way each phrase or sentence, or figure of speech, should be weighed separately, for its rhetorical accuracy.

Faults of taste are detected by a much more delicate process than the application of formulæ, but they almost invariably arise (if one's native sense is keen) from the use of a word in a perfectly legitimate and pure sense, when the public attaches to it an atmosphere (let us call it) which is vulgar or disagreeable. In such cases the word should be sacrificed, for the atmosphere of a word carries a hundred times more weight with the common reader than the strict and logical mean-

ing. For instance, the word *mellow* is applied to over-ripe fruit, and to light of a peculiarly soft quality. If one is writing for a class of people who are familiar with the poets, it is proper enough to use the word in its poetic sense; but if the majority of the readers of one's work always associate *mellow* with over-ripe fruit, to use it in its poetic sense would be disastrous.

The repetition of the same word many times in succeeding phrases is a figure of speech much used by certain recognized writers, and is a most valuable one. Nor should one be afraid of repetition whenever clearness makes it necessary. But the repetition of the same word in differing senses in adjoining phrases is a fault to be strictly guarded against. The writer was himself once guilty of perpetrating the following abomination: "The *form* which represented her, though idealized somewhat, is an actual likeness elevated by the force of the sculptor's love into a *form* of surpassing beauty. It is her *form* reclining on a couch, only a soft, thin drapery covering her transparent *form*, her head slightly raised and turned to one side, and having concentrated in its *form* and posture the height of the whole figure's beauty." Careful examination will show that *form*, used five times in this paragraph, has at least three very slightly differing meanings, a fact which greatly adds to the objectionableness of the recurrence of the sound.

A writer who has a high regard for accuracy and completeness of expression is very liable to

fall into tediousness in his explanations. He realizes that he is tedious, but he asks, "How can I say what I have to say without being tedious?" Tediousness means that what is said is not worth saying at all, or that it can be said in fewer words. The best method of condensation is the use of some pregnant phrase or comparison which rapidly suggests the meaning without actually stating it. The art of using suggestive phrases is the secret of condensation.

But in the rapid telling of a story or description of a scene, perhaps no fault is so surely fatal as a momentary lapse into meaningless fine phrases, or sentimentality. In writing a vivid description the author finds his pen moving even after he has finished putting down every significant detail. He is not for the moment sure that he has finished, and thinks that to complete the picture, to "round it up," a few general phrases are necessary. But when he re-reads what he has written, he sees that it fails, for some unknown reason, of the power of effect on which he had counted. His glowing description seems tawdry, or overwrought. He knows that it is not possible that the whole is bad: But where is the difficulty?

Almost invariably the trouble will be found to be in some false phrase, for one alone is enough to spoil a whole production. It is as if a single flat or sharp note is introduced into a symphony, producing a discord which rings through the mind during the whole performance.

To detect the fault, go over the work with the utmost care, weighing each item of the description, and asking the question, Is that an absolutely necessary and true element of the picture I had in mind? Nine times out of ten the writer will discover some sentence or phrase which may be called a "glittering generality," or that is a weak repetition of what has already been well said, or that is simply "fine" language—sentimentality of some sort. Let him ruthlessly cut away that paragraph, sentence, or phrase, and then re-read. It is almost startling to observe how the removal or addition of a single phrase will change the effect of a description covering many pages.

But often a long composition will lack harmony of structure, a fault very different from any we have mentioned. Hitherto we have spoken of definite faults that must be cut out. It is as often necessary to make additions.

In the first place, each paragraph must be balanced within itself. The language must be fluent and varied, and each thought or suggestion must flow easily and smoothly into the next, unless abruptness is used for a definite purpose. Likewise each successive stage of a description or dialogue must have its relative as well as its intrinsic value. The writer must study carefully the proportions of the parts, and nicely adjust and harmonize each to the other. Every paragraph, every sentence, every phrase and word, should have its own distinct and clear meaning, and the writer should never allow himself to be in doubt as to the need or value of this or that.

To secure harmony of style and structure is a matter of personal judgment and study. Though rules for it cannot be given, it will be found to be a natural result of following all the principles of grammar, rhetoric, and composition. But the hard work involved in securing this proportion and harmony of structure can never be avoided or evaded without disastrous consequences. Toil, toil, toil! That should be every writer's motto if he aspires to success, even in the simplest forms of writing.

The ambitious writer will not learn harmony of style from any single short selection, however perfect such a composition may be in itself. It requires persistent reading, as well as very thoughtful reading, of the masters of perfect style. Two such masters are especially to be recommended,—Irving and Hawthorne. And among their works, the best for such study are "The Sketchbook," especially *Rip Van Winkle* and *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, by Irving, and "The Scarlet Letter" and such short stories as "The Great Stone Face," by Hawthorne. To these may be added Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," Scott's "Ivanhoe," and Lamb's "Essays of Elia." These books should be read and re-read many times; and whenever any composition is to be tested, it may conveniently be compared as to style to some part of one or other of these books.

In conclusion we would say that the study of too many masterpieces is an error. It means that none of them are fully absorbed or mastered.

The selections here given,* together with the volumes recommended above, may of course be judiciously supplemented if occasion requires; but as a rule, these will be found ample. Each type should be studied and mastered, one type after another. It would be a mistake to omit any one, even if it is a type that does not particularly interest the student, and is one he thinks he will never wish to use in its purity: mastery of it will enrich any other style that may be chosen: if it is found useful for shaping no more than a single sentence, it is to be remembered that that sentence may shape the destinies of a life.

CHAPTER XIII.

IMAGINATION AND REALITY.—THE AUDIENCE.

So far we have given our attention to style, the effective use of words. We will now consider some of those general principles of thought and expression which are essential to distinctively literary composition; and first the relation between imagination and reality, or actuality.

In real life a thousand currents cross each other, and counter cross, and cross again. Life is a maze of endless continuity, to which, nevertheless, we desire to find some key. Literature offers us a picture of life to which there is a key,

*A fuller collection of the masterpieces of style than the present volume contains may be found in "The Best English Essays," edited by Sherwin Cody.

and by some analogy it suggests explanations of real life. It is of far more value to be true to the principles of life than to the outer facts. The outer facts are fragmentary and uncertain, mere passing suggestions, signs in the darkness. The principles of life are a clew of thread which may guide the human judgment through many dark and difficult places. It is to these that the artistic writer must be true.

In the real incident the writer sees an idea which he thinks may illustrate a principle he knows of. The observed fact must illustrate the principle, but he must shape it to that end. A carver takes a block of wood and sets out to make a vase. First he cuts away all the useless parts. The writer should reject all the useless facts connected with his story and reserve only what illustrates his idea. Often, however, the carver finds his block of wood too small, or imperfect. Perfect blocks of wood are rare, and so are perfect stories in real life. The carver cuts out the imperfect part and fits in a new piece of wood. Perhaps the whole base of his vase must be made of another piece and screwed on. It is quite usual that the whole setting of a story must come from another source. One has observed life in a thousand different phases, just as a carver has accumulated about him scores of different pieces of wood varying in shape and size to suit almost any possible need. When a carver makes a vase he takes one block for the main portion, the starting point in his work, and builds up the rest

from that. The writer takes one real incident as the chief one, and perfects it artistically by adding dozens of other incidents that he has observed. The writer creates only in the sense that the wood carver creates his vase. He does not create ideas out of nothing, any more than the carver creates the separate blocks of wood. The writer may coin his own soul into substance for his stories, but creating out of one's mind and creating out of nothing are two very different things. The writer observes himself, notices how his mind works, how it behaves under given circumstances, and that gives him material exactly the same in kind as that which he gains from observing the working of other people's minds.

But the carver in fashioning a vase thinks of the effect it will produce, when it is finished, on the mind of his customer or on the mind of any person who appreciates beauty; and his whole end and aim is for this result. He cuts out what he thinks will hinder, and puts in what he thinks will help. He certainly does a great deal more than present polished specimens of the various kinds of woods he has collected. The creative writer—who intends to do something more than present polished specimens of real life—must work on the same plan. He must write for his reader, for his audience.

But just what is it to write for an audience? The essential element in it is some message to somebody. A message is of no value unless it is to somebody in particular. Shouting messages in-

to the air when you do not know whether any one is at hand to hear would be equally foolish whether a writer gave forth his message of inspiration in that way, or a telegraph boy shouted his message in front of the telegraph office in the hope that the man to whom the message was addressed might be passing, or that some of his friends might overhear it.

The newspaper reporter goes to see a fire, finds out all about it, writes it up, and sends it to his paper. The paper prints it for the readers, who are anxious to know what the fire was and the damage it did. The reporter does not write it up in the spirit of doing it for the pleasure there is in nor does he allow himself to do it in the manner his mood dictates. He writes so that certain people will get certain facts and ideas. The facts he had nothing to do with creating, nor did he make the desire of the people. He was simply a messenger, a purveyor.

The producer of literature, we have said, must write for an audience; but he does not go and hunt up his audience, find out its needs, and then tell to it his story. He simply writes for the audience that he knows, which others have prepared for him. To know human life, to know what people really need, is work for a genius. It resembles the building up of a daily paper, with its patronage and its study of the public pulse. But the reporter has little or nothing to do with that. Likewise the ordinary writer should not trouble himself about so large a problem, at least until

he has mastered the simpler ones. Writing for an audience if one wants to get printed in a certain magazine is writing those things which one finds by experience the readers of that magazine, as represented in the editor, want to read. Or one may write with his mind on those readers of the magazine whom he knows personally. The essential point is that the effective writer must cease to think of himself when he begins to write, and turn his mental vision steadily upon the likes or needs of his possible readers, selecting some definite reader in particular if need be. At any rate, he must not write vaguely for people he does not know. If he pleases those he does know, he may also please many he does not know. The best he can do is to take the audience he thoroughly understands, though it be an audience of one, and write for that audience something that will be of value, in the way of amusement or information or inspiration.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE USE OF MODELS IN WRITING FICTION.

We have seen how a real incident is worked over into the fundamental idea for a composition. The same principle ought to hold in the use of real persons in making the characters in a novel, or any story where character-drawing is an important item. In a novel especially, the charac-

ters must be drawn with the greatest care. They must be made genuine personages. Yet the ill-taste of "putting your friends into a story" is only less pronounced than the bad art of drawing characters purely out of the imagination. There is no art in the slavish copying of persons in real life. Yet it is practically impossible to create genuine characters in the mind without reference to real life. The simple solution would seem to be to follow the method of the painter who uses models, though in so doing he does not make portraits. There was a time in drawing when the school of "out-of-the-headers" prevailed, but their work was often grotesque, imperfect, and sometimes utterly futile in expressing even the idea the artist had in mind. The opposite extreme in graphic art is photography. The rational use of models is the happy mean between the two. But the good artist always draws with his eye on the object, and the good writer should write with his eye on a definite conception of some real thing or person, from which he varies consciously and for artistic purpose.

The ordinary observer sees first the peculiarities of a thing. If he is looking at an old gentleman he sees a fly sitting upon the bald spot on his head, a wart on his nose, his collar pulled up behind. But the trained and artistic observer sees the peculiarly perfect outline of the old man's features and form, and in the tottering gait, bent shoulders, and soiled senility a straight, handsome youth, fastidious in his dress and perfect

in his form. Such the old man was once, and all the elements of his broken youth are clearly visible under the hapless veneer of time for the one who has an eye to see. This is but one illustration of many that might be offered. A poor shop girl may have the bearing of a princess. Among New York illustrators the typical model for a society girl is a young woman of the most ordinary birth and breeding, misfortunes which are clearly visible in her personal appearance. But she has the bearing, the air of the social queen, and to the artist she is that alone. He does not see the veneer of circumstances, though the real society girl would see nothing else in her humble artistic rival.

In drawing characters the writer has a much larger range of models from which to choose, in one sense. His models are the people he knows by personal association day by day during various periods of his life, from childhood up. Each person he has known has left an impression on his mind, and that impression is the thing he considers. The art of painting requires the actual presence in physical person of the model, a limitation the writer fortunately does not have. At the same time, the artist of the brush can seek new models and bring them into his studio without taking too much time or greatly inconveniencing himself. The writer can get new models only by changing his whole mode of life. Travel is an excellent thing, yet practically it proves inadequate. The fleeting impressions do not remain,

and only what remains steadily and permanently in the mind can be used as a model by the novelist.

But during a lifetime one accumulates a large number of models simply by habitually observing everything that comes in one's way. When the writer takes up pen to produce a story, he searches through his mental collection for a suitable model. Sometimes it is necessary to use several models in drawing the same character, one for this characteristic, and another for that. But in writing the novelist should have his eye on his model just as steadily and persistently as the painter, for so alone can he catch the spirit and inner truth of nature; and art, if it is anything, is the interpretation of nature. The ideal character must be made the interpretation of the real one, not a photographic copy, not idealization or glorification or caricature, unless the idealization or glorification or caricature has a definite value in the interpretation.

CHAPTER XV.

CONTRAST.

In all effective writing contrast is far more than a figure of speech: it is an essential element in making strength. A work of literary art without contrast may have all the elements of construction, style, and originality of idea, but it will be weak, narrow, limp. The truth is, contrast is the measure of the breadth of one's ob-

servation. We often think of it as a figure of speech, a method of language which we use for effect. A better view of it is as a measure of breadth. You have a dark, wicked man on one side, and a fair, sunny, sweet woman on the other. These are two extremes, a contrast, and they include all between. If a writer understands these extremes he understands all between, and if in a story he sets up one type against another he in a way marks out those extremes as the boundaries of his intellectual field, and he claims all within them. If the contrast is great, he claims a great field; if feeble, then he has only a narrow field.

Contrast and one's power of mastering it indicate one's breadth of thought and especially the breadth of one's thinking in a particular creative attempt. Every writer should strive for the greatest possible breadth, for the greater his breadth the more people there are who will be interested in his work. Narrow minds interest a few people, and broad minds interest correspondingly many. The best way to cultivate breadth is to cultivate the use of contrast in your writing.

But to assume a breadth which one does not have, to pass from one extreme to another without perfect mastery of all that lies between, results in being ridiculous. It is like trying to extend the range of the voice too far. One desires a voice with the greatest possible range; but if in forcing the voice up one breaks into a falsetto, the effect is disastrous. So in seeking range

of character expression one must be very careful not to break into a falsetto, while straining the true voice to its utmost in order to extend its range.

Let us now pass from the contrast of characters and situations of the most general kind to contrasts of a more particular sort. Let us consider the use of language first. Light conversation must not last too long or it becomes monotonous, as we all know. But if the writer can pass sometimes rapidly from light conversation to serious narrative, both the light dialogue and the serious seem the more expressive for the contrast. The only thing to be considered is, Can you do it with perfect ease and grace? If you cannot, better let it alone. Likewise, the long sentence may be used in one paragraph, and a fine contrast shown by using very short sentences in the next.

But let us distinguish between variety and contrast. The writer may pass from long sentences to short ones when the reader has tired of long ones, and *vice versa*, he may pass from a tragic character to a comic one in order to rest the mind of the reader. In this there will be no very decided contrast. But when the two extremes are brought close together, are forced together perhaps, then we have an electric effect. To use contrast well requires great skill in the handling of language, for contrast means passing from one extreme to another in a very short space, and if this passing is not done gracefully, the whole effect is spoiled.

What has been said of contrast in language, character, etc., may also be applied to contrasts in any small detail, incident, or even simile. Let us examine a few of the contrasts in Maupassant, for he is a great adept in their use.

Let us take the opening paragraph of "The Necklace"* and see what a marvel of contrast it is: "She was one of those pretty and charming girls who are sometimes, as if by a mistake of destiny, born in a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, understood, loved, wedded, by any rich and distinguished man; and she had let herself be married to a little clerk in the Ministry of Public Instruction." Notice "pretty and charming"—"family of clerks." These two contrasted ideas (implied ideas, of course) are gracefully linked by "as if by a mistake of destiny." Then the author goes on to mention what the girl did not have in a way that implies that she ought to have had all these things. She could not be wedded to "any rich and distinguished man"; "she let herself be married to a little clerk."

The whole of the following description of Madam Loisel is one mass of clever contrasts of the things she might have been, wanted to be, with what she was and had. A little farther on, however, we get a different sort of contrast. Though poor, she has a rich friend. Then her husband brings home an invitation at which he

*The story may be found in "The Odd Number," or in "The World's Greatest Short Stories," edited by Sherwin Cody.

is perfectly delighted. Immediately she is shown wretched, a striking contrast. He is shown patient; she is irritated. She is selfish in wishing a dress and finery; he is unselfish in giving up his gun and the shooting.

With the ball the author gives us a description of Madam Loisel having all she had dreamed of having. Her hopes are satisfied completely, it appears, until suddenly, when she is about to go away, the fact of her lack of wraps contrasts tellingly with her previous attractiveness. These two little descriptions—one of the success of the ball, one of hurrying away in shame, the wretched cab and all—are a most forcible contrast, and most skilfully and naturally represented. The previous happiness is further set into relief by the utter wretchedness she experiences upon discovering the loss of the necklace.

Then we have her new life of hard work, which we contrast in mind not only with what she had really been having, but with that which she had dreamed of having, had seemed about to realize, and had suddenly lost for ever.

Then at last we have the contrast, elaborate, strongly drawn and telling, between Madam Loisel after ten years and her friend, who represents in flesh and blood what she might have been. Then at the end comes the short, sharp contrast of paste and diamonds.

In using contrast one does not have to search for something to set up against something else. Every situation has a certain breadth, it has two

sides, whether they are far apart or near together. To give the real effect of a conception it is necessary to pass from one side to the other very rapidly and frequently, for only in so doing can one keep the whole situation in mind. One must see the whole story, both sides and all in between, at the same time. The more one sees at the same time, the more of life one grasps and the more invigorating is the composition. The use of contrast is eminently a matter of acquired skill, and when one has become skilful he uses contrast unconsciously and with the same effort that he makes his choice of words.

APPENDIX

Errors in the Use of Words.

All of. Omit the *of*.

Aggravate. Does not mean *provoke* or *irritate*.

Among one another. This phrase is illogical.

And who. Omit the *and* unless there is a preceding *who* to which this is an addition.

Another from. Should be *another than*.

Anyhow, meaning *at any rate*, is not to be used in literary composition.

Any place. Incorrect for *anywhere*.

At. We live *at* a small place, *in* a large one, and usually *arrive at*, not *in*.

Avocation. Not to be confused with *vocation*, a main calling, since *avocation* is a side calling.

Awful does not mean *very*.

Back out. An Americanism for *withdraw*.

Balance. Not proper for *remainder*, but only for *that which makes equal*.

Beginner. Never say *new beginner*.

Beside; besides. The first means *by the side of*, the second *in addition to*.

Be that as it will. Say, *be that as it may*.

Blame on. We may lay the *blame on*, but we cannot *blame it on* any one.

But what. Should be *but that*.

Calculate. Do not use for *intend*.

Can. Do not use for *may*. "May I go with you?" not "Can I go with you?"

Clever. Does not mean *good-natured*, but *talented*.

Demean. Means to *behave*, not to *debase* or *degrade*.

Disremember. Now obsolete.

Don't. Not to be used for *doesn't*, after a singular subject such as *he*.

Else. Not follow by *but*; say, "nothing else *than* pride."

Expect. Do not use for *think*, as in "I expect it is *so*."

Fetch. Means to *go and bring*, hence *go and fetch* is wrong.

Fix. Not used for *arrange* or the like, as "fix the furniture."

From. Say, "He died *of* cholera," not *from*.

Got. Properly you "have got" what you made an effort to get, not what you merely "have."

Graduate. Say, "The man *is graduated* from college," and "The college *graduates* the man."

Had ought. *Ought* never requires any part of the verb *to have*.

Had rather, had better. Disputed, but used by good writers.

Handy. Does not mean *near by*.

In so far as. Omit the *in*.

Kind of. After these two words omit *a*, and say, "What kind of man," not "What kind of *a* man." Also, do not say, "*kind of* tired."

Lady. Feminine for *lord*, therefore do not speak of a "sales-lady," "a man and his lady," etc.

Last; latter. We say *latter* of two, in preference to *last*; but *last* of three.

Lay; lie. We *lay* a thing down, but we ourselves *lie* down; we say, "He laid the Bible on the table," but "He lay down on the couch;" "The coat has been laid away," and "It has lain in the drawer." *Lay, laid, laid*—takes an object; *lie, lay, lain*—does not.

Learn. Never used as an active verb with an object, as in "I *learned* him his letters." We say, "He *learned* his letters," and "I *taught* him his letters."

Learned. "A *learned* man"—pronounce *learn-ed* with two syllables; but "He has *learned* his lesson"—one syllable.

Like. Do not say, "Do *like* I do." Use *as* when a conjunction is required.

Lives. Do not say, "I had just as *lives* as not," but "I had just as *lief*."

Lot. Does not mean *many*, as in "a *lot* of men," but *one division*, as, "in that *lot*."

Lovely. Do not overwork this word. A rose may be *lovely*, but hardly a plate of soup.

Mad. We prefer to say *angry* if we mean *out of temper*.

Mistaken. Some critics insist that it is wrong to say "I am *mistaken*" when we mean "I *mistake*."

Love. We *like* candy rather than *love* it. Save *love* for something higher.

Most. In writing, do not use '*most* for *almost*.

Mutual friend. Though Dickens used this expression in one of his titles in the sense of *common friend*, it is considered incorrect by many critics. The proper meaning of *mutual* is reciprocal.

Nothing like. Do not say, "*Nothing like* as handsome."

Of all others. Not proper after a superlative; as, "greatest of all others," the meaning being "the greatest of all," or "great above all others."

Only. Be careful not to place this word so that its application will be doubtful, as in "His mother only spoke to him," meaning "Only his mother."

On to. Not one word like *into*. Use it as you would *on* and *to* together.

Orate. Not good usage.

Plenty. Say, "Fruit was plentiful," not "plenty."

Preventative. Should be *preventive*.

Previous. Say, "previously to," not "previous to." Also, do not say, "He was too previous"—it is a pure vulgarism.

Providing. Say, "*Provided* he has money," not "Providing."

Propose. Do not confuse with *purpose*. One *proposes* a plan, but *purposes* to do something, though it is also possible to *propose*, or make a proposition, to do something.

Quite. Do not say, "Quite a way," or "Quite a good deal," but reserve the word for such phrases as "Quite sure," "Quite to the edge," etc.

Raise; rise. Never tell a person to "raise up," meaning "raise himself up," but to "rise up." Also, do not speak of "raising children," though we may "raise horses."

Scarcely. Do not say, "I shall scarcely (hardly) finish before night," though it is proper to use it of time, as in "I saw him scarcely an hour ago."

Seldom or ever. Incorrect for "seldom if ever."

Set; sit. We *set* the cup down, and *sit* down ourselves. The hen *sits*; the sun *sets*; a dress *sits*.

Sewerage; sewage. The first means the system of sewers, the second the waste matter.

Some. Do not say, "I am *some* tired," "I like it *some*," etc.

Stop. Say, "*Stay* in town," not "*Stop* in town."

Such another. Say "another such."

They. Do not refer to *any one*, by *they*, *their*, or *them*; as in "If any one wishes a cup of tea, they may get it in the next room." Say, "If any one . . . he may . . ."

Transpire. Does not mean "occur," and hence we do not say "Many events transpired that year." We may say, "It transpired that he had been married a year."

Unique. The word means *single, alone, the only one*, so we cannot say, "very unique," or the like.

Very. Say, "very much pleased," not "very pleased," though the latter usage is sustained by some authorities.

Ways. Say, "a long *way*," not "a long *ways*."

Where. A preposition of place is not required with *where*, and it is considered incorrect to say, "Where is he gone to?"

Whole of. Omit the *of*.

Without. Do not say, "*Without* it rains," etc., in the sense of *unless, except*.

Witness. Do not say, "He *witnessed* a bull-fight" reserve it for "witnessing a signature," and the like

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